A grammar of the Ahamb language (Vanuatu)

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ABSTRACT

A grammar of the Ahamb language (Vanuatu) offers a description of the endangered and previously undocumented Ahamb language spoken by around 950 people. This grammatical description is one of the main outcomes of the Ahamb Language Documentation Project, which involved over 8 months of data collection with Ahamb speakers in Vanuatu and resulted in an archived collection of over 50 hours of recorded speech and other materials. This description is based on a corpus of around 22 hours of annotated Ahamb speech and other texts.

This thesis starts with an introduction to the Ahamb language, its speakers and the contexts in which it is spoken. The grammatical description that follows consists of a description of Ahamb's phonology, morphology and syntax. Ahamb's phonology is characterised by distinctive prenasalisation in its plosives and trills. There are four contrastive trills, including the typologically rare plain bilabial trill. The vowel inventory is also relatively large compared to other related languages, with eight contrastive vowels.

The description of nominals and noun phrases in Ahamb spans four chapters. Nouns in Ahamb are classified as common, personal and local. They can also be classified as alienable and inalienable, which corresponds to a structural distinction in possessive constructions involving classifiers (general and alimentary) or direct suffixation respectively. Noun phrases consist of a nominal head and various modifiers that follow it in a relatively flexible order.

Verbs in Ahamb can be transitive and intransitive. Intransitive verbs are further classified as active or stative. Detransitivisation is possible with the use of prefixation or reduplication. Verbs can take a number of prefixed tense/aspect/mood/polarity modifiers and commonly feature a subject index. Subject indexes come in three paradigms with forms for all person, number and clusivity distinctions. Neutral subject indexes are used in a variety of situations and combine most freely with other preverbal modifiers. Sequential event subject indexes are used to mark the second and subsequent verb in complex clauses that encode sequential events with the same subject. Irrealis subject indexes are used in interrogatives and negative modality constructions, among others. The objects of transitive verbs can be encoded by an object pro-index, which can take four different forms.

Ahamb has SVO word order. Negation can be expressed in a number of ways, including a separate prohibitive coding and a negative modality particle. Different verb-like forms can

function as prepositions and deictic markers. Complementation can be expressed with or without a complementiser, corresponding to a distinction in the semantic properties of the complement taking verb. Verb serialisation has been attested on the nuclear and core level. A special type of nuclear serialisation-like construction involves coverbs – non-prototypical verb forms that are only attested in such constructions. On the core level, switch-function and ambient serialisation is attested. Subordination is possible with a large variety of conjunctions. Other complex clause types include sequential event constructions and both syndetic and asydentic coordinating constructions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GLOSSES AND ABBREVIATIONS

List of glosses	
1DU	first person dual
1PL	first person plural
1SG	first person singular
2DU	second person dual
2PL	second person plural
2SG	second person singular
3DU	third person dual
3PL	third person plural
3SG	third person singular
ACCR	accreted article
ALIM	alimentary
ANA	anaphoric
ART	article
AUG	augmentative coordinator
CLF	classifier
CNSTR	construct suffix
COMP	complementiser
DEM	demonstrative
DIST	distal
DU	dual
DUP	reduplication
EMP	emphatic marker
EXCL	exclusive
FOC	focus marker
GNR	general
GNRP	general preposition (*hën*)
GO	prior motion marker
IMM.PST	immediate past
INCL	inclusive
INDF	indefinite
INTENT	intentive mood
INTR	intransitive
IPFV	imperfective aspect
IRR	irrealis
ITJ	interjection
LIM	limiter
LK	linker
LOC	local noun marker
LOCP	locative preposition (*lön*)
NEC	necessative
NEGMOD	negative modality
NSG	non-singular
OBJ	object pro-index

PERS	personal noun marker
PL	plural
PRN	pronoun
PROH	prohibitive
PROX	proximal
Q	interrogative particle
QNT	quantifier
SBQT	subsequential marker
SEC	sequential event subject index
SEQ	sequential aspect
SG	singular
TEMP	temporal local noun marker
TR	transitive
VOC	vocative

List of other abbreviations

ELAR	Endangered Languages Archive
ELDP	Endangered Languages Documentation Programme
k.o.	kind of
NCV	North and Central Vanuatu
NP	noun phrase
PERS.PRN	personal pronoun
PNCV	Proto North and Central Vanuatu
POc	Proto Oceanic
POSS.DET	possessive determiner
PM	possessum
PP	prepositional phrase
PR	possessor
SEC	sequential event construction
SI	subject index
SLN	spatial local noun
SVC	serial verb construction
TLN	temporal local noun

CHAPTER 1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Ahamb

This thesis is a grammatical description of Ahamb (ISO 639-3 code: ahb; Glottolog code: axam1237), the language of the people of the small Ahamb Island, which is located off the southern coast of Malekula.[1] Malekula is the second largest island in the Republic of Vanuatu in the South Pacific. The language name that has been adopted in this work and the previous linguistic literature is based on the toponym 'Ahamb'. The speakers of Ahamb normally refer to their language as *naujin sdrato* [nauˈtʃin sⁿdraˈto] 'our language', as opposed to *naujin sabat* [nauˈtʃin saˈᵐbat] 'foreigners' language(s)', which is used as a collective term for languages introduced since European contact – Bislama (a dialect of Melanesian Pidgin), which is Vanuatu's national language and the country's lingua franca, as well as English and French, which have official status. In Bislama, Ahamb speakers normally refer to their language as *lanwis* 'language'.

In previous linguistic literature, the language's name has been spelled as <A<u>h</u>amb> (by Arthur Capell, see §1.4.2), <A<u>x</u>amb> (Tryon 1976) and <A<u>kh</u>amb> (Charpentier 1982). The spelling with <h> was adopted in this work because of the community's preferences (see §2.7). The toponym Ahamb is normally pronounced [aˈxaᵐp] in the Ahamb language. The final prenasalised plosive is normally devoiced, but it can also be reduced to [m]. Since Bislama normally lacks a velar fricative, the island's name is commonly pronounced with a [k] sound instead, both by outsiders and by Ahamb speakers when they speak Bislama. Thus, the name of the island has also been seen spelled as <Akhamb>, <Akamb>, <Aham>, <Akham> and even <Akam>.

This thesis is one of the main outcomes of the Ahamb Language Documentation Project, which was initiated in 2017 with the main goals of documenting and describing Ahamb. Some revitalisation efforts have also been undertaken. This chapter serves as an introduction to the Ahamb language and the context in which it is spoken, on the one hand, and to the project and the grammatical description, on the other hand.

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[1] The name of the island is alternatively spelled <Mal<u>a</u>kula>. I have used here the version which is preferred by the Ahamb community, both in terms of pronunciation and spelling.

A detailed description of the contexts in which the Ahamb language is spoken was published by Rangelov, Bratrud & Barbour (2019). Sections 1.2-1.3 offer a summary of the findings in that publication, including discussions of the geographic and linguistic context in §1.2 and the sociolinguistic context in §1.3, which also includes a discussion of Ahamb's vitality. Previous work on Ahamb is summarised in §1.4.

The Ahamb Language Documentation Project and the methodology used for collecting and analysing linguistic data are the topic of §1.5. The aim and focus of this grammar and its organisation are discussed in §1.6 and §1.7 respectively. A short typological overview of Ahamb is presented in §1.8.

1.2 Geographic and linguistic context

1.2.1 Ahamb Island and the Malekula mainland

Ahamb Island covers less than 0.5 km^2 and lies around 2 km off the central south coast of Malekula Island. The location of Malekula and Ahamb Island within Vanuatu and the larger South Pacific area are given in Map 1-1. Most Ahamb speakers live in villages on Ahamb Island and the nearby Malekula mainland. For a number of reasons, including population growth and natural disasters attributed to seismic activity and climate change, a steady migration from Ahamb Island to the Malekula mainland started around the turn of the 21st century.[2] The mainland is where Ahamb Islanders have most of their ancestral land and that is where they go hunting and have their gardens. Communication links between the island and the mainland are well developed. Map 1-2 is a detailed map of Ahamb island listing the different villages and other landmarks. Map 1-3 shows the Ahamb speaking settlements on the mainland.

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[2] The initial phase of this migration is described in bundle [ahb096] in the Ahamb corpus (Rangelov 2020).
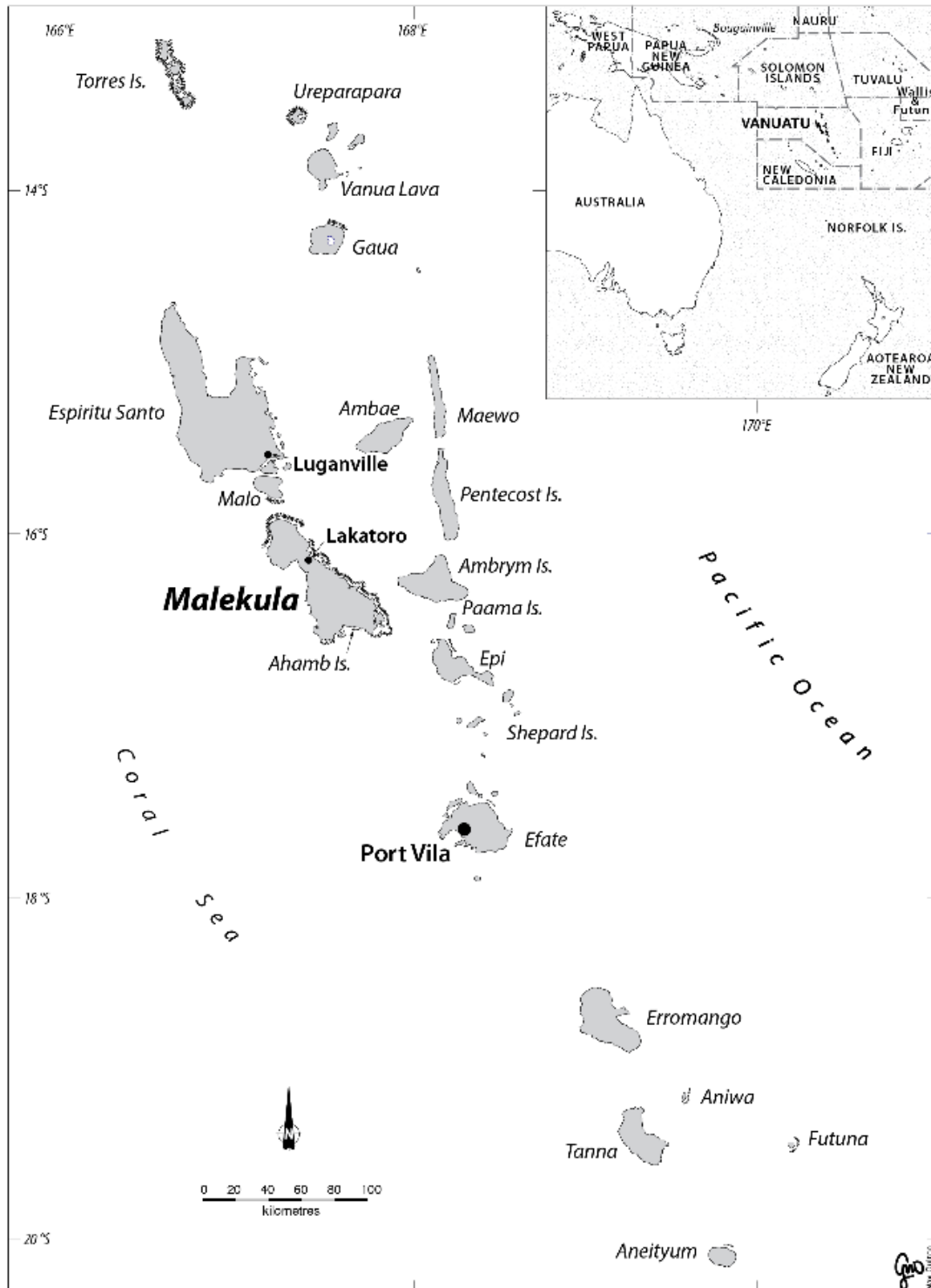
Map 1-1. Map of Malekula Island in the Vanuatu Archipelago. Map drawn by cartographer Max Oulton for the Malekula Languages Project. Used with permission.
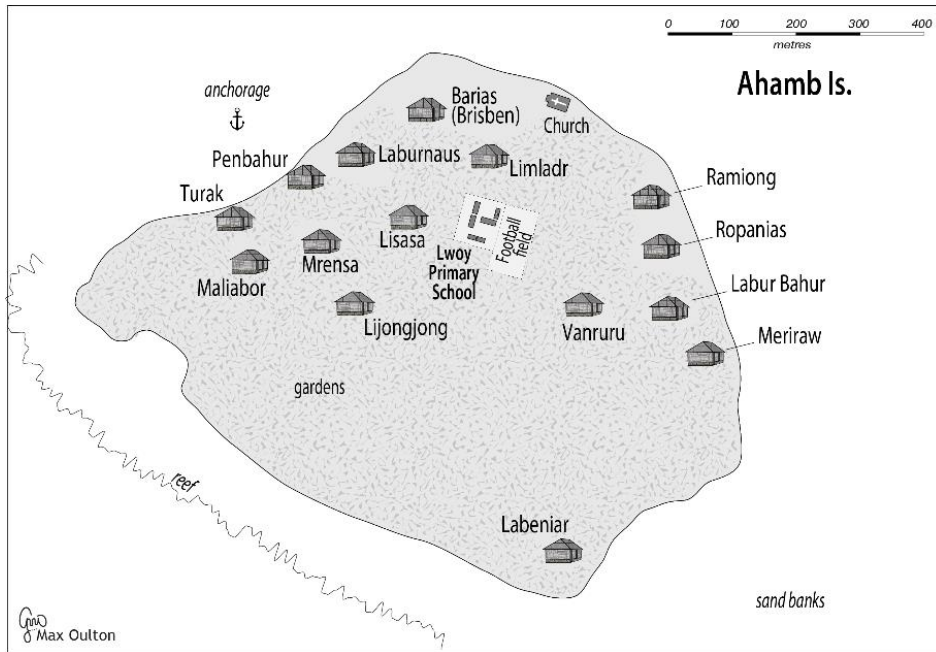
Map 1-2. Map of Ahamb Island showing villages and other landmarks. Map drawn by cartographer Max Oulton for the Malekula Languages Project. Used with permission.
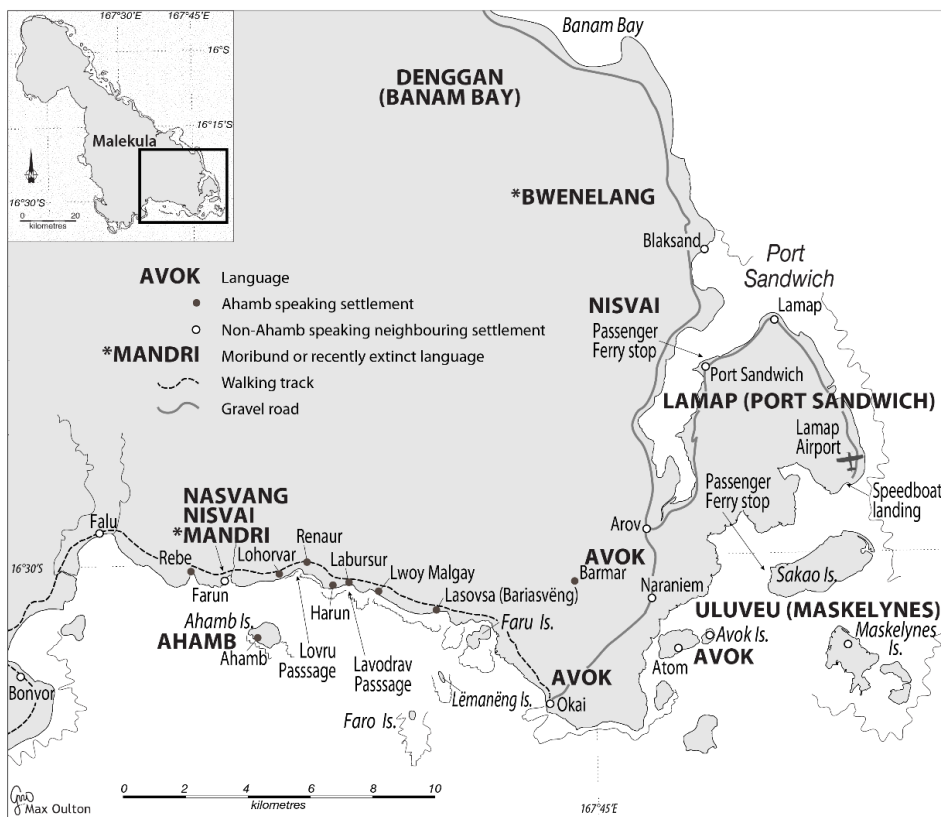
Map 1-3. Map of Southeast Malekula. Map drawn by cartographer Max Oulton for the Malekula Languages Project. Used with permission.

There are around 950 people who identify as belonging to the ethnolinguistic group of Ahamb with most of them being speakers of the Ahamb language. Of them, around 570 live on Ahamb Island and around 270 live permanently on the Malekula mainland. The rest live outside of the South Malekula area. A population census and a demographic and geographic breakdown of the number of Ahamb speakers can be found in Rangelov, Bratrud & Barbour (2019: 114-115).

1.2.2   Genetic affiliation of Ahamb

Ahamb is a member of the Southern Oceanic linkage, which is part of the Oceanic subgroup of the Austronesian language family. The higher-order branches of Oceanic, starting from the root are Austronesian > Malayo-Polynesian > Central/Eastern Malayo-Polynesian > Eastern Malayo-Polynesian > Oceanic (Ross, Pawley & Osmond 2016: 99). The Southern Oceanic linkage is further subdivided into two branches. Ahamb is a member of the North Central Vanuatu branch (Clark 2009). There is evidence to consider the 30 or so languages of Malekula (Map 1-4) as a discrete group within the Central Vanuatu linkage of North Central Vanuatu (Lynch 2016: 399; Walworth, Greenhill & Gray 2018). Lynch (2016) subdivides Malekula languages into a Northern, Western and Eastern subgroup. Ahamb belongs to the Eastern Malekula subgroup and more specifically to its South-Eastern Malekula branch (Lynch 2016: 418). Based on the evidence presented above, the genealogical affiliation of Ahamb, starting with Oceanic as the root node, can be summarised as: Oceanic > Southern Oceanic > North Central Vanuatu > Central Vanuatu > Malekula > Eastern Malekula > South-Eastern Malekula > Ahamb.

Map 1-4. The languages of Malekula. Map drawn by cartographer Max Oulton for the Malekula Languages Project. Used with permission.
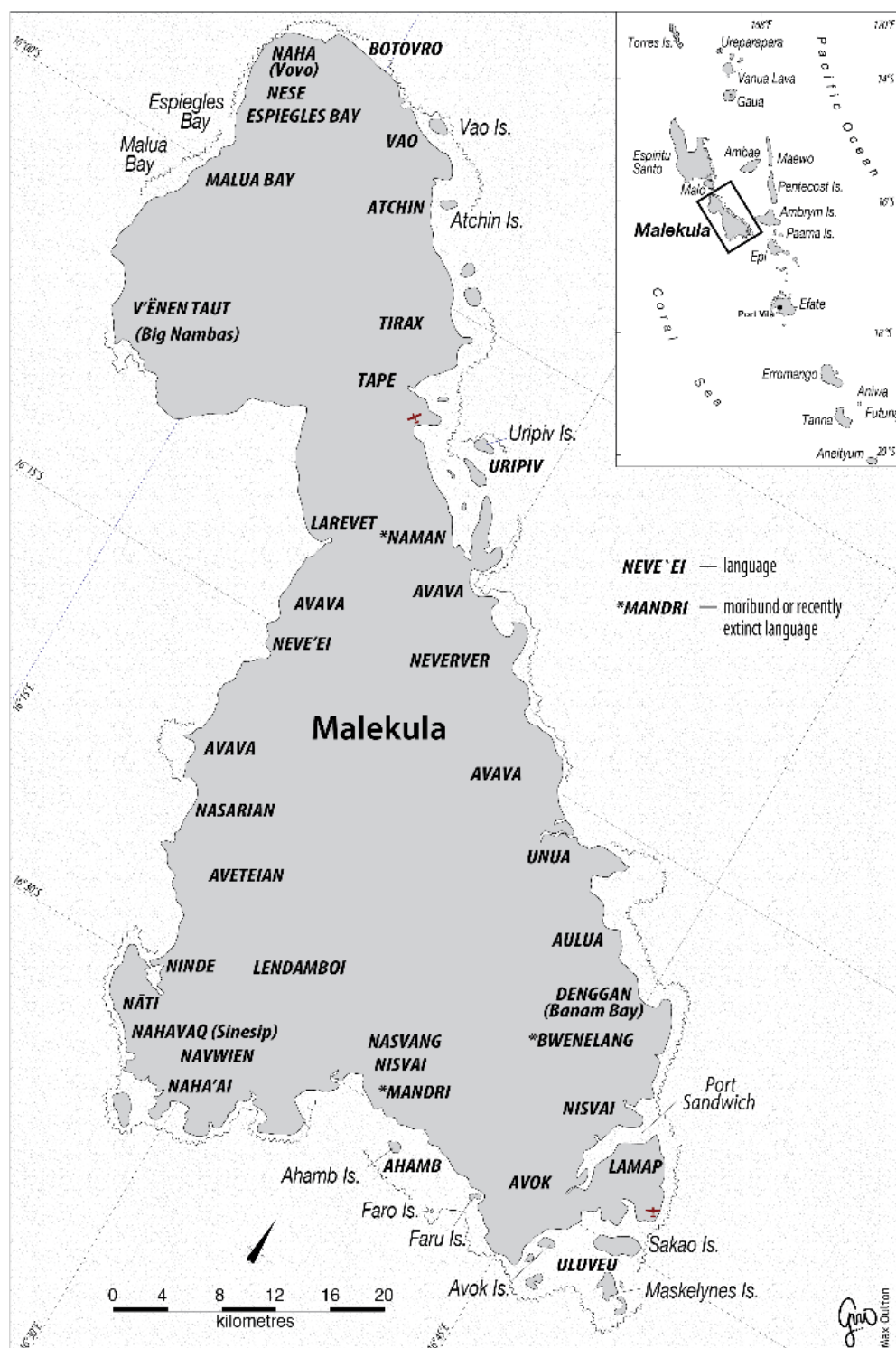
1.2.3 Neighbouring ethnolinguistic groups and languages

Map 1-3 lists the names of ethnolinguistic groups/languages in South-East Malekula, which are Ahamb's immediate neighbours. Members of the Ahamb community have most regular contact with the speakers of Nasvang, Nisvai and Avok.

Nasvang is mostly spoken in the relatively large mainland village of Farun, where Ahamb Islanders often leave their boats and canoes on their daily trips to their gardens on the mainland. Ahamb speakers who live on the mainland also have regular contact with the residents of Farun. Ahamb men visit the *nakamals* 'kava bar and men's socialising venue' in Farun. Some Ahamb speakers have found employment in Farun's educational institutions. Ahamb-speaking children from Rebe go to school or kindergarten in Farun. In 2011, the mainland Ahamb-speaking villages Rebe, Lohorvar and Renaur joined the Farun parish, further increasing the contact between Ahamb speakers and the residents of Farun. There are three Ahamb-speaking households that have recently relocated to Farun.

A few Nisvai speakers reportedly also live in Farun. However, most Nisvai speakers live in and around the village of Blaksand on the east coast of Malekula.[3]

Ahamb speakers have also reported the existence of another mainland language, which used to be spoken in inland areas before its speakers migrated to the south coast in the 20th century. This language is usually referred to as Mandri and it appears to be virtually extinct, with a few older men from the Ahamb community claiming that they remember some vocabulary.[4] It appears that Mandri has been replaced by other South Malekula languages.

The largest Avok speaking settlement is the village of Okai, with other speakers living on the small offshore islands (including Avok Island) and in the mainland villages of Naraniem and Arov. Ahamb speakers from the mainland, especially those from Barmar, have regular contact with Avok speakers in Okai and Naraniem. Children from Barmar go to school in

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[3] Charpentier (1982: 39-48) offers an account of the historical migration in this part of Malekula. Before European contact, Nasvang and Nisvai were spoken in the inland areas of Malekula and most of their speakers migrated to the coast during the first half of the 20th century. While most Nasvang speakers migrated to Farun, most Nisvai speakers migrated to the east coast with a minority of them moving south to Farun.

[4] In bundle [ahb087] in the Ahamb corpus (Rangelov 2020), speaker Haivuv Salnarmar tells the story of how his family moved from the inland areas during an epidemic and found shelter in Ahamb-speaking areas. Haivuv has said that his parents' first language was Mandri.

Okai and the villages are connected by a track, which can be driven by four-wheel drive vehicles. Ahamb Islanders also have regular contact with Okai. One way for Ahamb Islanders to travel to Lamap, South-East Malekula's commercial centre, or Lakatoro, the capital of Malampa province in North-East Malekula, is to reach Okai by sea (there are no four-wheel drive tracks connecting mainland South Malekula villages to Okai) and then travel by road to Lamap or Lakatoro.

Ahamb speakers have reported that Ahamb has historically been perceived as the dominant indigenous language of South Malekula, although it is unclear whether other South Malekula communities share this view. One reason Ahamb may have been dominant in the past is that until the 1980s the only school in South Malekula was located on Ahamb Island, which means that many children from mainland communities boarded on Ahamb Island. Now there are also primary schools in Farun and Okai. The South Malekula Secondary School was relocated from Ahamb Island to the Malekula mainland in 2009, because of the perceived higher risk of natural disasters on Ahamb Island.

The South Malekula Secondary School opened in 2002. Before then many students from Ahamb attended secondary school on the Maskelyne Islands and were in close contact with the Uluveu language. Ahamb people travel regularly to Lamap but there does not appear to be any significant contact with the Lamap language.

Ahamb speakers report a relatively high degree of mutual intelligibility between Ahamb, Nasvang, Nisvai and Avok. The indigenous languages are sometimes used for communication between people from these language communities and Ahamb speakers. Since many speakers of Nasvang, Nisvai and Avok who studied on Ahamb Island as children may have some fluency in Ahamb, it is possible that some of them adapt their speech when they communicate with Ahamb speakers. Bislama is also often used for communication between the speakers of these languages. Mutual intelligibility with Uluveu and Lamap is reportedly very low, even if speakers are aware of the similarities between Ahamb and these languages.

To the west of Ahamb Island and the westernmost Ahamb-speaking mainland village of Rebe, lie the settlements of Falu, Bonvor and Malfakal, where Western Malekula languages are spoken. Despite their geographic proximity, the cultural connections with these communities are tenuous.

1.3 Sociolinguistic context

This section provides a summary of the sociolinguistic context in which the Ahamb language is spoken. The topics of social organisation, religion, education, economic activity and daily life, are covered. The factors described here are relevant to Ahamb's endangerment and to understanding some of the linguistic examples presented in this thesis. A summary of Ahamb's vitality assessment is presented in §1.3.5.

1.3.1 Social organisation

The main organisation of Ahamb society is around patrilineal clans (*nahmar* in Ahamb, *nasara* in Bislama). Children inherit the clans of their fathers. Girls cannot marry a man from the clans of their ancestors of four generations back. In fact, they are encouraged to marry a man from the clan of their great-great-grandfather in order to keep kin relations with that clan strong (Bratrud 2018a: 94-96). Women usually move to live with their husband's family after marriage. In the past decades there has been an increase of women from areas outside of South Malekula who marry Ahamb men and become part of the Ahamb community. In some such households Bislama is the preferred language of the home because such women tend to have more difficulties gaining fluency in Ahamb than women from the neighbouring communities where more closely related languages are spoken.

Marriages are important events and their preparation takes many years, involving a range of ceremonies and network building. One such ceremony is *nasëvsëvin*, during which the parents of children give gifts on their behalf to their paternal uncles who will later support them in important life events including marriage. A *nasëvsëvin* ceremony is recorded in bundle [ahb071] (Rangelov 2020).[5]

Marriage also defines the very important taboo kin relationships (Bratrud 2011: 48). One's taboo relatives are one's parents-in-law (especially of the opposite sex) and all men that are regarded as "brothers" by one's spouse (brothers and male cousins). For men only, the wives of one's "small brothers" (one's younger brothers as well as all the sons of one's father's younger brothers) are also taboo relatives. A person needs to show uttermost respect to his or her taboo relatives. This includes stepping out of the way when one meets a taboo relative,

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[5] See also §7.6 for a discussion of some of the language involved in this ceremony.

standing on the opposite side of a shared space and not mentioning their names or body parts (especially related to the head and the inside of the body). Special linguistic forms are used in connection with taboo relatives. For example, dual instead of singular pronouns and subject indexes are used when addressing a taboo relative or referring to him or her (see §3.2.1.1); the kin term *avngong* is used specifically for one's parents-in-law (see §5.2.5); instead of a taboo relative's name, one can say, for example, "X's mother", where X is the taboo relative's child (normally first-born son) and their mother is the taboo relative (see §4.2.4, see also example 6.21a in §6.4); the verb *rav* 'take' is used to refer to taboo relatives eating, instead of the conventional verbs *han/kan* 'eat'.

1.3.2 Religion and spirituality

Traditional religious practices mostly revolved around clan spirits, ancestral spirits, and natural spirits. Religious authority was organised around the *nakëkrohin* 'male graded society'. The first Christian missionaries arrived in the area in 1897 and currently virtually all members of the Ahamb community belong to a Christian church. Many traditional practices have since been abandoned, including the tradition of head-binding (Miller 1989: 252),[6] and tooth extraction as a badge of marriage (Cheesman 1933: 203; Speiser 1991: 162).[7]

More than 90% of Ahamb people belong to the Presbyterian Church. The other congregations present in the Ahamb community are the Neil Thomas Ministries, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, and the Bible Teaching Ministries. Social life revolves around church-related activities with regular church services, a Sunday School, meetings of the Men's Fellowship, the Women's Fellowship (Presbyterian Women's Mission Union), and the Youth Fellowship. Ahamb church leaders take active part in church activities on the national level. Group trips to other parts of Vanuatu are organised regularly. Church activities are one of the main conductors of outside ideas and influences into the Ahamb community.

Bislama is the predominant language of the church, because of the frequent presence of people who do not speak Ahamb at church events, including women from other areas who married Ahamb men, and guests from other parishes. Besides, very few religious texts have been translated into Ahamb. One notable exception is the comic book *Nren palongin husür*

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[6] See also bundle [ahb087] in the Ahamb corpus (Rangelov 2020).

[7] See also bundle [ahb074] in the Ahamb corpus (Rangelov 2020)

Atua 'The man who loved God' (Reuben 2012). Jacklyn Reuben has been working on the translation of the Gospel of Mark and the Book of Obadiah into Ahamb.

1.3.3 Education

There is a kindergarten on Ahamb Island where children are taught mainly through the medium of the vernacular. Lwoy Primary School on Ahamb Island offers education in years one to six. English used to be the only language of education in school until 2012 when the new Vanuatu National Language Policy (Vanuatu Ministry of Education and Training 2012) provided for instruction in vernacular languages (including Bislama) in years one to three. Resources for educational materials in around 60 vernacular languages (around half of Vanuatu's languages (Lynch & Crowley 2001; François et al. 2015)) were allocated, based on a criterion of a speaker population of over 1,000 (Early & Tamtam 2015). Ahamb did not meet the criteria and currently education through the medium of Bislama is offered in the first three years of primary school.

As part of the Ahamb Language Documentation Project, literacy materials for the kindergarten and primary school have been developed and delivered and more are under development. However, their use in the primary school is subject to government endorsement and the availability of teacher training.

Students who successfully finish the sixth year of primary school can go on to study in a secondary school. Most Ahamb speaking students attend the South Malekula Secondary School. There are a number of training institutes throughout Vanuatu that students can attend following secondary school.

1.3.4 Daily life and economic activity

Traditionally Ahamb Islanders live a subsistence lifestyle, involving fishing and seafood collection, hunting and growing crops, pigs and cattle. Root crops such as *dram* 'yam', *nabbiag* 'taro', *kumal* 'sweet potato', *maniok* 'cassava', *nabrav* 'breadfruit', *navüj* 'banana', and *barme* 'leafy greens' are grown in gardens for food. Traditional foods include *narog* 'laplap' (grated tubers or banana, garnished with coconut milk and meat, fish or pumpkin, wrapped in banana leaves and cooked in an earth oven) and *nakujkuj* 'bunia' (meat and whole tubers cooked in an earth oven).

Most gardens of Ahamb Islanders are located on the Malekula mainland, which means that travel between Ahamb Island and the mainland is undertaken on a daily basis.

Social networks are maintained through communal work and the exchange of labour and assistance on the family, clan or community level.

Traditional economic activities are mixed with a cash-based economy, whose importance has been growing steadily. Money is needed to pay school fees, arrange ceremonies and other events, and construct brick buildings, which are steadily replacing traditional thatch-roof buildings. More recently, Ahamb people have started spending more money on communications and travel. Functional mobile Internet access arrived at the end of 2017 and mobile phones and related technology, including solar power solutions, are rapidly gaining popularity. Transportation links have also expanded. Traditionally, travel between Ahamb Island and the mainland has been done by *nwog* 'canoe' but *nabut* 'open speed boats' have been in use for the past couple of decades. For travel further away throughout Vanuatu, there are unscheduled cargo ships, a scheduled passenger ferry, which stops at the Maskelyne Islands and Lamap, and scheduled air service from Lamap Airport.

Nmaru 'copra' was the most important cash crop in Ahamb for decades. In the past decade it has been replaced by *namelhudr* 'kava', which Ahamb people grow on the hillsides of mainland Malekula and sell to merchants in Port Vila. Other sources of income are seasonal employment in New Zealand through the Recognised Seasonal Employment scheme (RSE) (Immigration New Zealand 2020) and small local businesses including speed boat transportation and small-scale retail services. Women weave traditional *naben* 'pandanus mats', which are sold locally or in Port Vila, and used for traditional ceremonies and in the home. A few people are employed by the government in the primary and secondary school and one person operates the small healthcare centre.

Photograph 1-1. Maryan Kalmase weaving a mat. Image © Tihomir Rangelov

Photograph 1-2. Teman Greken diving for seafood at the reef near Faro island. Image © Tihomir Rangelov

Photograph 1-3. A type of narog *'laplap'. Pictured is Kelen Sammy. Image © Tihomir Rangelov*

Photograph 1-4. Maryan Kalmase and Kalmase Kalsay in their taro garden on the Malekula mainland.
Image © Tihomir Rangelov

Photograph 1-5. Making a traditional canoe requires a lot of knowledge and experience. Pictured are James Bhavës and John Miller. Image © Tihomir Rangelov

Photograph 1-6. A canoe with a sail. Pictured is Deacon Ian Spoky. Image © Tihomir Rangelov

1.3.5 Language vitality assessment

Rangelov, Bratrud & Barbour (2019: 112-119) published a vitality assessment of the Ahamb language according to the nine factors proposed in the UNESCO Language Vitality and Endangerment document (Brenzinger et al. 2003). Table 1-1 presents a summary of Ahamb's vitality assessment.

Table 1-1. Summary of UNESCO Language Vitality Assessment for Ahamb. Grey shading indicates current status; arrows indicate anticipated direction of change. (Rangelov, Bratrud & Barbour 2019: 113).

Factor	Grade					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. Intergenerational transmission				←	▓	
2. Absolute number of speakers	~950					
3. Proportion of speakers within total population				←	▓	
4. Trends in existing language domains				▓		
5. Response to new domains and media		▓				
6. Materials for language education and literacy			▓	→		
7. Institutional attitudes and policies					▓	
8. Community members' attitudes				▓		
9. Amount and quality of documentation		▓	→	→		

The Ahamb language experiences most pressure from Bislama, which enjoys a more prestigious status as the language of the government, trade, religion and education. The improvement in communications and transportation (see §1.3.4) and the increased migration to the Malekula mainland (see §1.2.1) and to urban areas in Vanuatu, are also major contributing factors to the use of Bislama.

The motivation behind the grades for the different criteria was discussed in detail in Rangelov, Bratrud & Barbour (2019: 112-119). A short summary is given here. While most children on Ahamb Island and the Ahamb-speaking settlements on the Malekula mainland acquire Ahamb as their first language and Ahamb is the most common language children use

when they play, there is a growing trend of Bislama replacing Ahamb as the language of the home. Two reasons for this are the higher number of non-Ahamb speakers in the community and the higher prestige of Bislama as the language of the church, primary education, government, trade and communication. Thus, Ahamb is only partially being used in these domains. It is rarely used in new domains, such as social media. The lack of literacy materials in Ahamb until recently could explain why Ahamb speakers may be reluctant to use it in writing. The revitalisation efforts as part of the Ahamb Language Documentation Project may help to change attitudes towards the language.

Broader institutional support is defined by the Constitution of Vanuatu (Republic of Vanuatu 2006) where indigenous languages enjoy recognition and protection. The recent move to include vernacular education in the first three years of primary school offers further recognition, but, as mentioned above (§1.3.3), Ahamb is yet to be included in this programme. The community's attitudes towards Ahamb are mixed. While most Ahamb people recognise the vernacular as a vehicle for their customs and traditions, there is relatively little enthusiasm for using the language in church or school. In contrast, the kindergarten teachers on Ahamb Island have demonstrated strong motivation for using Ahamb literacy and numeracy materials. There is strong belief in the community that older speakers are the "real" speakers of the language, which may mean that many younger speakers feel less confident about their language skills.

The last language vitality factor, related to the amount and quality of documentation, is where significant improvement is expected. Until recently there were very few written materials in Ahamb and documentation was limited to vocabulary items. The current grammatical description, the corpus of Ahamb recordings and texts behind it, and the literacy materials created as part of the Ahamb Language Documentation Project have the potential to boost Ahamb's vitality status.

1.4   Previous work on Ahamb

1.4.1   Anthropological research

The people of Ahamb have been the subject of two anthropological studies. Jean de Lannoy (2004) published research on the historical depopulation, migration, and religious conversion

in South Malekula, including Ahamb, based on fieldwork conducted in the area in 1997-1999.

Since 2010, Tom Bratrud has conducted 20 months of ethnographic fieldwork with the Ahamb community, which has resulted in a number of publications on the intersection of social, cultural, political and economic life on Ahamb (Bratrud 2011; 2012; 2013; 2018b), the notions of community and conflict in the context of kinship, church, and land disputes (Bratrud 2017; 2019b; 2020), and a Christian revival movement, which has played a central role in the Ahamb community since 2014 (Bratrud 2018a; 2019a).

1.4.2   Linguistic research

A limited amount of linguistic research has preceded the Ahamb Language Documentation Project. Miller (1989: 191, 213, 251, 257) reports that around the beginning of the 20th century, Rev. T. Watt Leggatt, who was based in Aulua on the east coast of Malekula, travelled to Ahamb Island, learned the Ahamb language and translated some hymns and the Gospel of John into Ahamb. It has not been possible to locate these translations. The earliest available written materials in the Ahamb language were collected by Arthur Capell with the help of Joyce Trudinger in the 1950s. These include a proposed orthography (Capell et al. 1957b), a word list (Capell et al. 1957a), elicited sentences and phrases (Capell et al. 1957f; Capell et al. 1957c) and three stories (Capell & Newton 1957; Capell et al. 1957e; 1957d).

Tryon (1976) published around 300 vocabulary items for Ahamb. Charpentier (1982) recorded around 1,500 vocabulary items in Ahamb, as part of his comparative survey of South Malekula languages. Audio recordings did not accompany these two publications. Between 2015 and 2019, Shimelman et al. (2019) recorded around 200 vocabulary items for various Malekula lects, including Ahamb, and published them together with audio recordings.

The current work is the first phonological and morphosyntactic description of Ahamb.

1.5   The Ahamb Language Documentation Project

The current grammatical description of Ahamb is one of the main outcomes of the Ahamb Language Documentation Project, which started in February 2017. The project's principal investigator is the author of this thesis and the project was organised around the author's

doctoral studies. The Ahamb community expressed their support for the project in a letter dated January 3, 2017 and signed by chiefs and elders from Ahamb Island.

Funding for the project came primarily from the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) as part of Individual Graduate Scholarship grant IGS0304. ELDP also organised the author's training in data collection, annotation and archiving. Additional funding was provided by the University of Waikato. Data collection for this project was carried out as per ethics approval FS2017-13 of April 28, 2017 granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Waikato, with amendments of June 7, 2018 and April 16, 2020.

Besides the Ahamb community, ELDP and the University of Waikato, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VKS) is also a party to this project. VKS issued a research permit for this project on May 10, 2017.

The project involved three field trips to Ahamb in 2017 and 2018, during which the bulk of the data used for this description was collected, transcribed and translated.

The aim and focus of the project were defined so as to satisfy the conditions and wishes of the parties involved and included the creation of an annotated corpus of Ahamb language data with a focus on video data, a description of the language, of which the current work is the major part, and the creation of materials to boost literacy in Ahamb and Ahamb's status.

The following sections elaborate further on the methodology used for creating this work, its aims and organisation.

1.5.1   Data collection

1.5.1.1   *Fieldtrips, data collection and language teachers*

The bulk of the data for this thesis was collected during three field trips to Vanuatu, when the author spent the majority of his time on Ahamb Island with visits to Ahamb-speaking villages on the Malekula mainland. Below is a short description of each field trip. Appendix A contains a description of the collected data, organised in bundles as archived in the Endangered Languages Archive, including an exhaustive list of the Ahamb speakers who participated.

Field trip 1 (FT1) lasted from May 25 to July 29, 2017. Besides a few days in transit in Port Vila on both sides of the field trip, most of the time was spent on Ahamb Island, with a few visits to the mainland villages and gardens. During FT1, data was collected mostly using elicitation methods. The community quickly set up the *Ahamb Language Committee* with Elder Tom Ansel as chairman and the following members: Elder Edwin Andrew, Grem Fred Aimatleu, Tomson Sam Drunlel, Mark Andri Fred, Morvel Tom Vanbir, James Bhavës and Hedrick Tom Vanbir. On Ahamb Island older people are perceived to have better understanding of the language, speak a "pure" form of Ahamb and have deeper knowledge of customs, traditional stories, history and indigenous terms for flora and fauna. Older people also had more time to dedicate to the project. During this field trip a lot of lexical data and short sentences were elicited using image prompts developed by the Malekula Languages Project and provided by the chief project supervisor Dr. Julie Barbour. These included images of flora, fauna and other items typical of the local environment, images of traditional and modern activities and data collection prompts. The Ahamb Language Committee also worked on the translation of primary school readers in Bislama of the Vanua Readers series, into Ahamb. During FT1, a few stories told by committee members were recorded. A couple of stories were transcribed and translated on paper. Data was collected for literacy materials for the kindergarten and primary school with kindergarten teacher Ena Mark.

Field trip 2 (FT2) lasted from September 21 to December 20, 2017. Most of FT2 was dedicated to recording, transcribing and translating speech. Since the author was based on Ahamb Island most of the time, and the Ahamb Language Committee comprised middle-aged and elderly men, special effort was made to record speakers with different backgrounds, especially younger people, women, and residents of the Malekula mainland. Max Jack Sohnaur, Jessica Thomas, Krem Skepha and Ivana Rörmassing assisted with transcription and translation in ELAN (ELAN 2020). During FT2 citation forms of Ahamb words were recorded for phonetic analysis. Data was also collected for a description of the contexts in which the Ahamb language is spoken, including interviews to determine attitudes related to the language and a population count by clan/village. This data resulted in Rangelov, Bratrud & Barbour (2019). Work on literacy materials for the kindergarten and primary school was conducted with Ena Mark and Frano David.

Field trip 3 (FT3) lasted from July 17 to November 7, 2018, of which 84 days were spent on Ahamb Island and South Malekula. A delay in Port Vila due to a volcanic eruption and disrupted transportation options meant that some data were collected with Ahamb speakers in

Port Vila. During FT3, more speech was recorded, transcribed and translated and more recordings of citation forms were made. Targeted elicitation with audiovisual and linguistic prompts related to possessive constructions, inalienable nouns (Franjieh 2018, bundles CLE_CQ, CLE_VC_videos), and certain types of verbs (Bohnemeyer, Bowerman & Brown 2001), was conducted.

A fourth, short fieldtrip was planned for March/April 2020, but had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this final field trip was to deliver literacy materials to the community and to collect some additional data to fill gaps that were identified in the analysis of the collected data. It was possible to collect some final data by phone with Max Jack Sohnaur, who was located in New Zealand at the time.

Photograph 1-7. A group of Ahamb speakers, including some members of the Ahamb Language Committee, in front of the church on Ahamb Island. Pictured are (from left to right) Elder Willy Frank, Elder Edwin Andrew, Ailin Jon Woka, Elder Haindrivleu Frank, Mark Andri Fred, Morvel Tom Vanbir, Elder Selma Bhavës, James Bhavës[†], Elder Eddi Bognie, Terry Andrew, Haivuv Salnarmar. Image © Max Jack Sohnaur, used with permission.

Photograph 1-8. A storytelling session with members of the Ahamb Language Committee. Pictured from left to right are Morvel Tom Vanbir, James Bhavës[†] and Grem Fred Aimatleu. Image © Tihomir Rangelov.

Photograph 1-9. Grem Fred Aimatleu is one of the most active members of the Ahamb Language Committee. Image © Tihomir Rangelov

Photograph 1-10. Morvel Tom Vanbir demonstrating a kastom dance. Image © Tihomir Rangelov

Photograph 1-11. Gleta Fedrid proofreading an Ahamb story while her child Bratrud Skepa is taking a nap. Image © Tihomir Rangelov

Photograph 1-12. Pera Benjman and Jenny Markenly from the mainland village of Renaur working on an Ahamb story. Image © Tihomir Rangelov

Photograph 1-13. Aisen Obet is a retired politician from Ahamb Island who took part in the Vanuatu Independence movement and was a member of Vanuatu's first parliament. Image © Tihomir Rangelov

Photograph 1-14. Kindergarten teacher Ena Mark is one of the most enthusiastic activists for vernacular literacy. Image © Tihomir Rangelov

Photograph 1-15. Max Jack Sohnaur has been one my most devoted language teachers. He was the most active participant in transcription and translation sessions and assisted with elicitation work. Image © Tihomir Rangelov

Photograph 1-16. Sinsan Peter assisting with the recording of lexical items for analysis of nasality (see §2.3.3.1). Image © Tihomir Rangelov

1.5.1.2   *Recording technology*

Recording in video format was prioritised where possible during data collection. Many elicitation sessions were recorded only as audio, but most stories were recorded in video format. The following equipment was used:

- Zoom Q8 video recorder,
- Zoom H4N audio recorder,
- Audio Technica BP4025 X/Y stereo cardioid microphone,
- Shure WH20 headset microphone,
- simple unbranded earplugs were used as microphones to make recordings with separate oral and nasal channels (Stewart & Kohlberger 2017) (see §2.3.3.1),
- GoPro 6 video recorder.

The data were recorded at 16-bit/48KHz.

1.5.1.3   Data processing

The recorded audio and video files were backed up and, where necessary, converted to a format as required by the Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR) and processed according to ELAR's guidelines (Gaved & Salffner 2014). Translation and transcription were completed in ELAN (ELAN 2020) in the field with the help of four assistants (see §1.5.1.1). Further annotation and interlinearisation was performed by the author, both in the field and outside of the field, using the sorftware package Fieldworks Language Explorer (FLEx) (Fieldworks 2020).

1.5.1.4   The Ahamb corpus and archiving

The collected data has been archived with ELAR (Rangelov 2020),[8] where it is organised around bundles. Each bundle can contain a number of files: metadata file, video recording, audio recording, annotation file, photographs and other material as relevant. The annotated (transcribed, translated and interlinearised) corpus consists of 93,000 tokens (words) and includes field notes as well as 22 hours of recorded speech, most of which was recorded in video format. The archived data also includes around 30 hours of unannotated recordings, most of which are audio recordings of elicitation sessions. Recordings of elicited data for phonetic analysis and photographs have also been archived. The bundles are listed in Appendix A with short descriptions and other metadata.

The Ahamb data is also being archived with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre's National Film and Audio Archive, and with the Malekula Languages Project Archive at the University of Waikato.

1.5.2   Data analysis

The linguistic analysis presented in this grammatical description is based on the data in the Ahamb corpus. Structural patterns were identified through observations in the field and while working with the data. Such patterns were verified by the extraction of examples from the corpus. The corpus was explored primarily through concordances and searches in ELAN and

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[8] As per an agreement with ELAR the archived data are being updated as the project progresses.

FLEx. Regular expressions were commonly used. When practical, the collected examples were further organised and explored using UNIX tools for pattern matching and sorting.

Phonetic data were analysed using Praat (Boersma & Weenink 2020).

No particular theoretical framework was adopted for the linguistic analysis presented in this work. Framework-free grammatical description and analysis principles (Haspelmath 2010) were employed, meaning that Ahamb was described in its own terms, rather than attempting to fit the description within an existing grammatical theory. At the same time, efforts were made to present the data in a way that would facilitate comparative and typological research. The choice of terminology was mostly motivated by the existing descriptions of languages of Malekula and Vanuatu, and the wider Oceanic literature. Historical data were used where possible to enrich the analysis.

1.5.3 Linguistic examples

In general, the statements made in this thesis are supported by examples with references to the Ahamb corpus. Whenever the statements were based on impressionistic data or (anecdotal) reports, this has been pointed out. Higher value was given to observations in recorded natural speech than to elicited data. Where a statement is only supported by elicited data, this is specifically mentioned.

Examples in the phonological description in Chapter 2 were supported by narrow or broad transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet, as appropriate. Examples in the morphosyntactic description of Ahamb in Chapters 3-13 are generally presented using the orthography created for this project (see §2.7). Glosses and free translation are also included. Free translations were chosen so as to best represent the original meaning with literal translations provided where relevant. In some cases, free translations include some information that is retrievable from the context rather than from the example in isolation. For example, English gendered pronouns were used when the gender is clear from the context, but not from the example itself, as Ahamb pronouns lack gender distinction (see §3.2.1); demonstratives in translations were chosen to reflect the context when it is not immediately clear from the example whether a demonstrative has proximal, distal or anaphoric function as there is no one-to-one correspondence between Ahamb and English demonstratives (see §4.5). Each example contains a reference to the corpus in square brackets in the format [XXX(.Y)-ZZZ], where XXX is the numerical index of the bundle ID (see Appendix A), Y is

the index of the ELAN annotation file within the bundle (for those few bundles that contain more than one ELAN file) and ZZZ is the number of the segment (line of text) within the bundle, assigned by ELAN/FLEx.

1.6 Aim and focus of this grammar

The primary audience of this grammar is linguists. The aim of this work is to present a description of the grammar of the Ahamb language, including its phonology, morphology and syntax. Priority was given to description and identification of patterns in the data. The description was guided by a typological perspective and the descriptive traditions of Oceanic languages and the languages of Vanuatu in particular.

The scope of this grammar was limited by time and word count constraints and a focus was placed on covering the basic levels of abstraction of language structure: phonology, morphology and syntax. Features of Ahamb that are structurally complex and/or typologically unusual were given more attention. Diachronic aspects were explored where appropriate but are not the main focus of this work. Where sociolinguistic variation was observed, this has been pointed out but such data are mostly impressionistic. As the first grammatical publication on the Ahamb language, there are areas of the language that could not be investigated in detail, and further work remains to be carried out in the future.

1.7 Organisation of this grammar

Following this introduction there are twelve chapters describing Ahamb's structure. Chapter 2 is dedicated to Ahamb's phonology. Chapters 3-6 discuss nouns and noun phrases in Ahamb. Verbs and the structure of the verb complex are discussed in Chapters 7-8. Clauses are the subject of Chapters 9-13 including discussions of the simple clause and clauses with more than one verb in the order of tightness of juncture between the verbs.

This text is intended to be used as a reference work rather than a cover-to-cover read. Therefore, each section is generally designed as a discrete piece with cross-referencing to other relevant parts of this work where relevant.

1.8 Typological overview of the Ahamb language

Many of the structural features of Ahamb are shared with those of prototypical Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002) and the languages of Vanuatu and Malekula in particular. However, some less common features have been discovered.

In terms of its phonology, Ahamb features a prenasalisation distinction in plosives and trills. The trill inventory is exceptionally large with two coronal trills and two bilabial trills. While the otherwise typologically rare prenasalised bilabial trill is relatively common in Malekula languages, Ahamb stands out with its contrastive plain bilabial trill (see §2.2.5). The vowel inventory is also somewhat larger than that of most Malekula languages, with two phonemic front rounded vowels (see §2.3).

As in many Oceanic languages, nouns are divided into common, personal and local classes (see §§3.3-3.5), and alternatively can be classified according to alienability, with alienable nouns further split into general and alimentary (see §5.3). Modifiers follow a nominal head in an order that is somewhat flexible (Chapter 6).

Verbs are classified into transitive and intransitive stems, which can be active or stative. Subject indexing is very common. Subject indexes come in three different paradigms (see §8.2). One paradigm is neutral and has a wide range of functions, another is used exclusively in sequential event structures and the third carries irrealis mood, which, unlike in other Malekula languages, does not encode future tense. A number of Tense/Aspect/Mood/Polarity prefixed markers can appear between the subject index and the verb stem (see §8.1). Transitive verbs take an object pro-index that can appear in different forms (see §§7.3, 8.6).

Ahamb's clauses generally feature SVO constituent order. A number of different negation strategies exist (Chapter 10). Deictic marking can be encoded on local noun phrases (see §3.5.1), on the clause level through special markers (see §9.2.8) or through sequentiality constructions (see §13.3.5). Prior motion/position can be expressed by a prefixed verb modifier (see §8.3), in serialisation constructions (see §11.2.1) or in sequential event constructions (see §13.3). The verb nucleus can consist of a simplex verb or a serial verb construction (see §11.2). The second verb of a nuclear serial verb construction can be of a small closed class, here termed 'coverbs', that show similarities to prepositions and adverbs (see §11.2.2). Serialisation is also possible on the core level where the object of the first verb serves as the subject of the second verb (see §11.3.1). Ahamb does not have any same-subject core serial verb constructions that have been attested in other Vanuatu languages. Instead,

same-subject sequential event constructions are marked with special subject indexes (see §§8.2.2, 13.3). Such constructions have not been attested in another related language, although they appear to be related to the echo-referencing constructions attested in other Vanuatu languages.

CHAPTER 2. PHONOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

Ahamb has 20 consonant and 8 vowel phonemes. The phonetic properties and allophony of Ahamb's segments are described in §§2.2, 2.3. The basic syllable structure and phonotactic constraints are discussed in §2.4. A number of phonological processes are outlined in §2.5. Stress and some basic intonation patterns are discussed in §2.6. The Ahamb orthography used in the rest of the chapters of this work, is presented in §2.7.

2.2 Consonants

Ahamb's consonant inventory is given in Table 2-1. For practical reasons, secondary articulation is not marked in phonemic transcriptions and some non-IPA symbols have been adopted.

Table 2-1. The consonant inventory

		labial	coronal	palatal	velar	labio-velar
Nasals		m	n		ŋ	
Plosives	Plain	p	t		k	
	Prenasalised	b	d		g	
Fricatives		v	s		x	
Affricates			tʃ			
Trills	Plain	ᴘ	r			
	Prenasalised	ʙ	D			
Lateral approximant			l			
Central approximants				j		w

Prenasalisation, rather than voicing is the main contrast in plosives and trills. Contrastive prenasalisation has been reconstructed for both Proto North Central Vanuatu (PNCV) (Clark 2009: 10-14) and Proto Oceanic (POc) (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 64). Most notably, Ahamb has a phonemic plain bilabial trill, which is typologically very rare. The IPA lacks a special character for the plain trill. In this work, the appropriate diacritic is used to denote

voicelessness ([ɓ̥]) in phonetic transcriptions, while small capital ᴘ is used to represent the plain bilabial trill phoneme for better readability and convenience.

It is worth noting that Ahamb does not have labiovelar phonemes, which are found in a number of Malekula languages. For example [mʷ, ᵐbʷ, pʷ, βʷ] are phonemic and contrast with their non-labiovelar counterparts in the neighbouring language Uluveu (Healey 2013: 12). Labiovelar phonemes have also been reconstructed for PNCV (Clark 2009: 10) and POc (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 63). These sounds have only been attested as variants of the corresponding non-labiovelar phonemes in Ahamb.

The following subsections describe Ahamb's consonants grouped according to their manner of articulation. Each subsection lists minimal pairs between closely related sounds in order to demonstrate the phonemic status of the segments, and provides a description of the phonetic properties of the sounds and any attested allophony.

2.2.1   Nasals

Ahamb has three nasal phonemes at the bilabial, alveolar and velar place of articulation. The minimal pairs in (2.1) demonstrate the contrast between the three nasals in initial and final position.

(2.1)   Nasal contrasts

/m/ vs /n/	[**m**aur] 'be alive'	[**n**aur] 'place'
	[**m**raŋ] 'be dry (for yam)'	[**n**raŋ] 'fly, wind'
	[ⁿdra**m**]⁹ 'yam'	[ⁿdra**n**] 'away'
/m/ vs /ŋ/	[**m**aru] 'coconut'	[**ŋ**aru] '(are) two'
/n/ vs /ŋ/	[**n**aus] 'rain'	[**ŋ**aus] 'it rains'
	[**n**avi] 'I am'	[**ŋ**avi] 'it is'
	[naᵐbo**n**] 'smell	[naᵐbo**ŋ**] 'day'

Vowels that appear before or after nasals are usually nasalised (see §2.3.3.1). The velar nasal /ŋ/ is often completely deleted before a vowel in the beginning of a word and is only identifiable through the carryover nasalisation on the vowel. This is often observed in verbs

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⁹ The phonetic realisation of /ᴅ/ appears to be retroflex (§2.2.5.2).

with the third-person singular subject index /ŋa-/ in casual speech. Examples are listed in (2.2a). /ŋ/ can also surface as the palatal [ɲ] before the front vowels /e/ and /i/ (2.2b).

(2.2)	Allophones of /ŋ/	
a.	apheresis with carryover nasalisation	/**ŋa**vuj/ '3SG.good' → [**ã**vuj]
		/**ŋa**patʃ/ '3SG.sleep' → [**ã**patʃ]
b.	[ɲ]	/tʃu**ŋ**-e/ 'send-OBJ' [tʃu**ɲ**e]
		/rə**ŋ**-i/ 'put-OBJ' [rə**ɲ**i]

The labiovelar allophone of /m/ is discussed in §2.2.8.

2.2.2 Plosives

Ahamb has two series of plosives – prenasalised voiced plosives and plain voiceless plosives. Prenasalised plosives are normally voiced throughout. Plain plosives have short positive or negative voice onset time, meaning that the vocal cords start vibrating shortly before or after the plosive's release. This means that postaspiration is rarely perceived but (partial) voicing is commonly perceived.

The prenasalised plosives are described here as complex segments rather than sequences of nasal and plain plosive. There are at least three reasons that support such an analysis in the case of Ahamb:

- Ahamb's syllables do not allow clusters of more than two consonants (see §2.4) and prenasalised plosives often occur together with other consonants. This means that an adjustment of the syllable structure constraints described in §2.4.3 would have to be made to allow for such an exception, which would be a less economical model.

- Ahamb speakers perceived these sounds as one segment when asked to spell out words, to spell words backwards or to syllabify words.[10] Ahamb speakers prefer to

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[10] When asked, speakers almost invariably spelled out prenasalised plosives as a single segment in word-initial and word-final position. However, a prenasalised plosive between two vowels was sometimes split into a nasal and plosive segment suggesting resyllabification, where the nasal portion can be assigned to an empty coda of the preceding syllable. For example, /nabon/ 'smell' was syllabified either as [na.ᵐbon] or as [nam.bon] and was spelled out as either n-a-ᵐb-o-n or n-a-m-b-o-n. However, it was also the case that a singleton consonant between two vowels was copied to an otherwise empty syllable coda and the next syllable's onset, e.g. /pləvi/

write these sounds as one letter, for example the motto of the local football team is spelled <Varus bonbon> 'We paddle together', rather than *<Varus mbonmbon>. Photograph 2-1 shows a photo of a t-shirt with the club's motto and logo.[11] The name of the island (and hence the language) – Ahamb – is traditionally spelled with <mb> likely because this spelling was introduced early by outsiders. Both the speakers and researchers have chosen not to change this established spelling tradition for the name of the island and the language.

- Prenasalised plosives are a salient feature of Oceanic languages and have been reconstructed for Ahamb's ancestral protolanguages (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002; Clark 2009).

Photograph 2-1. A promotional t-shirt with the motto of the Ahamb football club. The club's motto, Varus bonbon *'We paddle together', is spelled with <b> rather than <mb> for the prenasalised plosive /b/.*

The (near-)minimal pairs in (2.3) show the distinction between the three pairs of prenasalised and plain plosives.

(2.3)	Plosive contrasts in Ahamb	
/b/ vs /p/	[ᵐbus] 'plain, usual'	[pus] 'ask'
/d/ vs /t/	[ⁿdasⁿdas] 'be smooth'	[tas] 'again'
/g/ vs /k/	[ᵑgor] 'over, around'	[kor] 'make'

'pull it' (with a singleton /v/) was syllabified by a speaker as [pləv.vi], suggesting disfavouring of codaless syllables where possible, which could also explain the splitting of complex prenasalised segments between syllables by some speakers.

[11] This t-shirt was produced before the Ahamb Language Documentaton Project was initiated in 2017.

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Minimal pairs demonstrating the contrast between plosives and nasals with the same place of articulation, are listed in (2.4). In (2.4) and the rest of this chapter, both phonemic and phonetic notation are used where appropriate to represent regular phonological processes or morpheme boundaries.

(2.4)	Contrasts between plosives and nasals		
/ᵐb/ vs /m/	[ᵐbrax] 'throw away'		[mrax] 'be afraid'
	/leᵐb/ [leᵐp] 'be big'		[lem] 'be true'
/ⁿd/ vs /n/	[ⁿdasⁿdas] 'be smooth'		/na-s/ [nas] '1SG-see'
/ᵑg/ vs /ŋ/	/naroᵑg/ [naˈroᵑk] 'laplap'		[naˈroŋ] 'mangrove'

The prenasalised alveolar /ⁿd/ is the rarest segment in the language. It has only been attested systematically in three words:

(2.5)	Ahamb words with /ⁿd/
	/liⁿdumⁿdum/ 'whale'
	/ⁿdasⁿdas/ 'be smooth'
	/mavⁿdør/ 'egg'

The word /mavⁿdør/ 'egg' is pronounced with a plosive, [mavˈⁿdør], only by some speakers, most notably by children. Most adults pronounce it with a prenasalised coronal trill instead of /ⁿd/. The reason for /ⁿd/ being so rare is likely that the Ahamb reflexes of POc *d and *dr are normally /ᴰ/ but the distinction has been retained in these few words.

The prenasalised plosives /ᵐb/ and /ᵑg/ are usually devoiced word finally (/ⁿd/ has not been attested word-finally). This devoicing only affects the plosive section and voicing is heard during the prenasalisation phase. Furthermore, the prenasalised plosives can be articulated with no audible release: /naroᵑg/ 'laplap' is often heard as [naroᵑk̚] still maintaining its contrast with /naroŋ/ [naroŋ] 'mangroves'. In other cases, /ᵐb/ can be reduced to its nasal counterpart [m] word-finally. For example, the name of the island, /axaᵐb/, is commonly pronounced as [axam].

Velar plosives are palatalised before /e/ and /i/:

(2.6)	Palatalisation of /g, k/ before /e, i/
a.	/geru/ [ˈᵑɟeru] 'type of seashell'
	/pragin/ [ˈpraᵑɟin] 'work'

b.	/nakermenin/ [na**c**ermenin] 'father'
	/kiki/ [**cici**] 'be small'

The labiovelar allophone of /b/ is discussed in §2.2.8.

2.2.3 Fricatives

The three fricative phonemes in Ahamb occur at the same places of articulation as the plosives and nasals. Both the labial and the velar fricatives display substantial allophony.

The contrastive sets in (2.7) demonstrate the contrasts between the three fricatives.

(2.7)	Fricative contrasts in Ahamb: /v/ vs /s/ vs /x/		
	[**v**en] 'carry fruit'	[**s**en] 'POSS.GNR.3SG'	[**x**en] 'POSS.ALIM.3SG'
	/ta**v**/ [ta**f**] 'run (for water)'	[ta**s**] 'again'	[ta**x**] 'hold'

The contrasts between fricatives, plosives and nasals with the same place of articulation are demonstrated by the contrastive sets and the minimal pairs in (2.8):

(2.8)	Contrasts between fricatives and nasals/plosives with the same place of articulation		
/v/ vs /b/ vs /p/	[**v**ər] 'buy'	[ᵐ**b**ər] 'hang'	[**p**ər] 'diarrhea'
/v/ vs /m/	/sa**v**/ [sa**f**] 'which'	[sa**m**] 'POSS.GNR.2SG'	
/s/ vs /t/	[**s**aⁿk] 'POSS.GNR.1SG'	[**t**aⁿk] 'father'	
/s/ vs /n/	[**s**am] 'POSS.GNR.2SG'	[**n**am] 'mosquito'	
/x/ vs /g/ vs /k/	[**x**an] 'eat (TR)'	[ᵑ**g**an] 'resemble'	[**k**an] 'eat (INTR)'
/x/ vs /ŋ/	[naˈro**x**] 'I stay'	[naˈro**ŋ**] 'mangrove'	

2.2.3.1 Variants of /v/

The labial fricative /v/ has a number of different labial allophones: [v], [f], [β], [ɸ], [w] and [vʷ]. The labiovelar variant is discussed in detail in §2.2.8.

As with the prenasalised (voiced) plosives, /v/ surfaces as a voiceless fricative word-finally or before voiceless sounds:

(2.9)	Devoicing of /v/	
a.	word-finally	/nabrav/ [naᵐbra**f**] 'breadfruit'
b.	before voiceless sounds	/xavtʃ/ [xa**f**tʃ] 'cover'
		/vsox/ [**f**sox] 'meat'

The bilabial allophone [β] is predictable in a number of words where /v/ appears before a word-final /u/, which is either pronounced extra short or deleted (see §2.3.3.5). When /u/ is deleted, [β] is slightly longer than usual.

(2.10)	Variants of /v/ in word-final /vu/ sequences		
	token	short-final-vowel variant	consonant-final variant
	/nivu/ 'turtle'	[ˈniβŭ]	[niβ·]
	/vavu/ 'grandparent'	[ˈvaβŭ]	[vaβ·]
	/vuvu/ 'be new'	[ˈvuβŭ]	[vuβ·]
	/nrag ravu/ 'k.o. insect'	[ˈnraᵑg ˈraβŭ]	[ˈnraᵑg ˈraβ·]

In the compounds /vavu tøtøt/ 'grandfather' and /vavu kakav/ 'grandmother', the same /v/ segment undergoes devoicing because of the following voiceless plosive /t/ or /k/ across the morpheme boundary. These words are usually pronounced with [ɸ], but variants with [f] have also been observed:

(2.11)	Devoicing of word-final /vu/ sequences due to voiceless sound in following word		
	token	[ɸ] variant	[f] variant
	/vavu tøtøt/ 'grandfather'	[vaɸ tøˈtøt]	[vaf tøˈtøt]
	/vavu kakav/ 'grandmother'	[vaɸ kaˈkaf]	[vaf kaˈkaf]

In other cases, [v, f, β, ɸ] appear to be in free variation. Some examples are listed in (2.12). The labiodental variants [v, f] are preferred syllable-initially as in (2.12a). [β] is preferred between vowels, while [ɸ] is commonly attested after back vowels word-finally (where the devoicing conditions are present) as in (2.12b).

(2.12)	[v, f, β, ɸ] as variants of /v/	
a.	/van/ 'go'	[van] / [fan]
	/vnax/ 'steal'	[vnax] / [fnax]
b.	/nraᵑg uvuv/ 'wind'	[nraᵑk uβuɸ]
	/navov/ '(flower) bed'	[naˈβoɸ]

Word-finally, /v/ can sometimes appear as the labiovelar approximant /w/: /jav/ 'cut' can be pronounced as [jaw].

2.2.3.2   Variants of /s/

Unlike the other fricatives, /s/ has not been observed to have voiced variants. It has been observed in free variation with [tʃ] in the words listed in (2.13). Speakers reject [tʃ] as an allophone of /s/ in other words where /s/ appears in the same environment.

(2.13)	Words, in which [s]~[tʃ] free variation has been observed		
	token	variant with [s]	variant with [tʃ]
	/suv/ 'grate (banana)'	[suv]	[tʃuv]
	/sar/ 'spear'	[sar]	[tʃar]
	/suswax/ 'hide'	[suswax]	[tʃutʃwax]

2.2.3.3   Variants of /x/

The velar fricative phoneme often surfaces as at least partially voiced, especially between vowels. In such cases it is in free allophony with its voiceless counterpart. Less commonly, /x/ can surface as a velar trill [ʀ] especially in slower speech or carefully enunciated speech:

(2.14)	Free [x]~[ɣ]~[ʀ] variation			
		variant with [x]	variant with [ɣ]	variant with [ʀ]
	/ixa/ 'here'	[iˈxa]	[iˈɣa]	[iˈʀa]
	/axaᵐb/ 'Ahamb'	[aˈxaᵐp]	[aˈɣaᵐp]	[aˈʀaᵐp]

Before a voiceless consonant, the voiceless variant occurs most often in natural speech:

(2.15)	[x] before voiceless consonants
	/naxsen/ [naxsen] 'name'
	/roxtʃer/ [roxtʃer] 'yet'

2.2.4   The affricate /tʃ/

/tʃ/ is the only affricate phoneme in Ahamb. The minimal pairs in (2.16) demonstrate contrast between /tʃ/ and the alveolar fricative and plosive /s, t/.

(2.16)	Contrasts between /tʃ/ and /t, s/		
	/tʃ/ vs /t/	[**tʃ**av] 'cut'	[**t**av] 'run (water)'
		[**tʃ**i] 'shell out'	[**t**i] 'tea'
	/tʃ/ vs /s/	[**tʃ**ᵐbon] 'alone'	[**s**ᵐbon] 'end'
		[pa**tʃ**] 'sleep'	[pa**s**] 'give birth'
		[naˈvy**tʃ**] 'banana'	[naˈvy**s**] 'Fijian asparagus'

The sound [tʃ] has been observed as a surface representation of an underlying /ts/ sequence. For example, in standard negation constructions, the negator /sba/ changes to [tʃba] when following the reduced plural subject indexes which end in /t/ (see §§8.2.1.3, 10.2). This process is obligatory and is demonstrated in (2.17).

(2.17)	Palatalisation of /ts/ in subject index + negator sequences	
	underlying form	surface form
	/mət-/ '1PL.EXCL' + /sba-/ 'NEG'	[mətʃba]
	/ᴅət-/ '1PL.INCL' + /sba-/ 'NEG'	[ᴅətʃba]

[tʃ] can appear as a free allophone of /s/ after /t, n, tʃ/ in the same morpheme or across morpheme boundaries. This is not common and has not been observed in cases where /n/ is the accreted article (see §3.3.2.1) of a stem beginning with /s/, e.g. /n-sel/ 'knife' does not undergo palatalisation. Examples are listed in (2.18). In (2.18a), /s/ can appear as [tʃ] following /n/ in the same stem. In (2.18b), /s/ is part of the general possessive classifier /sa/ (see §5.3) and has a palatalised variant following a word ending in /t, n, tʃ/. A similar phenomenon has been observed in Naman, another Malekula language (Crowley 2006b: 27-28; Lynch 2019: 22).

(2.18)		Palatalisation of /s/ after /t, n, tʃ/		
		variant with /s/	palatalised variant	gloss
	a.	[ᵐʙy**ns**]	[ᵐʙy**ntʃ**]	'watch'
	b.	[naᵐbu**t s**a pasta]	[naᵐbu**t tʃ**a pasta]	'the pastor's boat'
		[nautʃi**n s**aᵐbat][12]	[nautʃi**n tʃ**aᵐbat]	'colonial languages' (lit. 'languages of foreigners')
		[navy**tʃ s**aᵐbat]	[naβy**tʃ tʃ**aᵐbat][13]	'Chinese banana' (lit. 'banana of foreigners')

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[12] In this example and the one below it, /sa/ merges with /abat/ 'European man' the two adjacent /a/ segments are shortened to a single /a/ (§2.5.3.1).

[13] The two adjacent affricates are degeminated in rapid speech.

2.2.5   Trills

2.2.5.1   *Trill contrasts*

Ahamb has four contrastive trill sounds. Such a large number of trill contrasts in one language is typologically very rare (Ladefoged & Maddieson 1996: 217). Ahamb's trills can be grouped in two pairs of plain and prenasalised segments – one pair at the bilabial and one pair at the coronal place of articulation. The coronal trills are very common in the language. The prenasalised bilabial trill is a salient feature of the language appearing in at least thirty words, some of which are frequently used. The plain bilabial trill is the least common of Ahamb's trills. It has been attested in a dozen words and appears only in the syllable onset before high back or central vowels. The other trills have been attested in both the onset and coda of a syllable.

The phonemic status of the bilabial trills is illustrated in the contrastive sets and minimal pairs in (2.19). The contrast in pre-vowel position is demonstrated in (2.19a). The examples in (2.19b) demonstrate the contrast word-final position. /ᴘ/ and /p/ do not normally appear word-finally (see §2.4.5).

(2.19)	Contrasts between labial trills, plosives and fricatives				
	/ʙ/	/ᴘ/	/b/	/p/	/v/
a.	[ᵐʙus] 'squeeze'	[ʙ̥us] 'blossom'	[ᵐbus] 'plain, usual'	[pus] [14] 'ask'	-
	-	[ʙ̥ər] 'be cold'	[ᵐbər] 'hang'	[pər] 'diarrhoea'	[vər] 'buy'
	[naᵐʙytʃ] 'stingwood'	-	-	-	[navytʃ] 'banana'
	[naᵐʙut] 'deaf person'	-	[naᵐbut] 'boat'	-	-
b.	/suʙ/ [suᵐʙ̥] 'sit down'	-	/sub/ [suᵐp] 'father'	-	/suv/ [suf] 'grate'
	/saʙ/ [saᵐʙ̥] 'be bad'	-	-	-	/sav/ [saf] 'which'

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[14] A video, including slow-motion recordings, of a speaker uttering the four forms on this row can be found in bundle [ahb700] in Rangelov (2020): https://elar.soas.ac.uk/Record/MPI1271824/. The bundle also includes audio and video recordings demonstrating other examples with bilabial trills, cf. Rangelov (2019).

The contrasts between the two coronal trills and related sounds such as /t/, /d/ and /tʃ/ are demonstrated by the contrastive sets and minimal pairs in (2.20).

(2.20) Contrasts between coronal trills, plosives, fricative and affricate

/D/	/r/	/d/	/t/	/s/	/tʃ/
[ndras] 'not be able to'	[ras] 'sea'	[^{n}das^{n}das] 'be smooth'	[tas] 'again'	-	-
[ndrum] 'swell'	[rum] 'room'	[li^{n}dum^{n}dum] 'whale'	-	-	-
[ndrof] 'close'	[rof] 'block'	-	[tof] 'stay'	[sof] 'soap'	-
[ndren] 'blood.3SG'	[ren] 'man'	-	-	[sen] 'POSS.GNR.3SG'	-
[undr] 'join together'	[ur] 'place	-	-	[us] 'rain'	[utʃ] 'talk'
[ndrəm] 'fall down'	[rəm] 'be five'	-	-	-	[tʃəm] 'outrigger'

2.2.5.2   *Articulation and allophony*

The plain alveolar trill /r/ can be articulated as a trill or a tap in free variation. The trilled variant is more common in careful speech.

The prenasalised trill /D/ involves a relatively long nasal closure, followed by a short oral closure and a plosive-like release, followed by at least one more oscillation of the tongue. Figure 2-1 shows a spectrogram and waveform for the word /maDøD/ 'be submerged' uttered by a 35-year-old female speaker. The plosive-like releases with at least two clear oscillations are clearly visible for both instances of /D/.
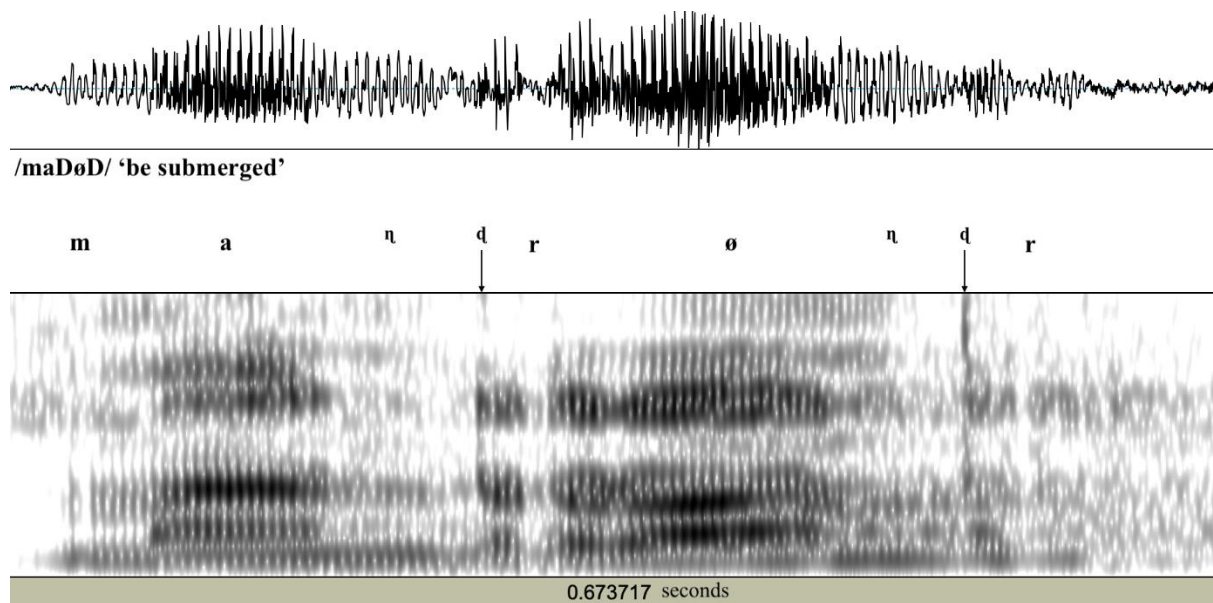
Figure 2-1. Spectrogram and waveform for the word /maDøD/ 'be submerged' uttered by a 35-year-old female speaker

The exact place of articulation of /D/ is unclear. However, both impressionistic data and reports by speakers suggest that the place of articulation is post-alveolar and that the sound is retroflex. Dimock (2009: 22) reports a similar retroflex sound in Nahavaq, another Malekula language. A palatographic study could shed more light on the exact articulation of /D/.

A similar sound has been observed in a few other related languages. In Avava, Crowley (2006a: 30) describes the sound as "a prenasalised alveolar trill, which involves a clearly audible excrescent voiced alveolar stop." For Neverver, Barbour (2012: 37-38) also specifically denotes the plosive release in phonetic transcriptions: [ndr]. Thieberger (2006: 52) specifies an "intrusive stop" in the pronunciation of prenasalised alveolar trills in South Efate, another language of Vanuatu. The speakers of Ahamb consistently reject pronunciations of /D/ where such "excrescent" plosive release is missing. The spectrogram in Figure 2-1 also shows a somewhat sharp release in both instances of /D/, suggesting a manifestation of this plosive release. In this work this sound is represented as [ndr] in phonetic transcriptions, specifically acknowledging the plosive release with a superscript ^{d}.

Word-finally, /D/ can undergo partial devoicing. The second instance of /D/ in Figure 2-1 is less clearly voiced than the first one. In such cases, trilling is normally retained. However, in some reduplicated words, where it appears in the coda of the reduplicated syllable, /D/ can be reduced to a coronal nasal in the first instance of the reduplicated syllable:

(2.21)	Reduction of /ᴅ/ to a nasal	
	/pyᴅpyᴅ/ 'be hot'	[py**n**pyndr]
	/reᴅreᴅ/ 'be white'	[re**nr**endr]

The articulation of the prenasalised bilabial trill /ʙ/ is similar to that of its coronal counterpart: a longer nasal closure precedes a short oral closure, followed by a plosive-like release and up to three additional oscillations of the lips. The spectrogram in Figure 2-2 demonstrates a bilabial trill featuring three oscillations of the lips. The second and following closures are weaker than the first and sometimes incomplete. Similarly to the prenasalised coronal trills, prenasalised bilabial trills have been called plosives with a trilled release (Ladefoged & Maddieson 1996: 129) (and can be represented by IPA symbols accordingly, e.g. [^{m}b^{ʙ}]). In Ahamb, even if the first release is more powerful than the second and following oscillations, an abrupt first release as in /ᴅ/ is not observed, nor has it been reported by speakers as a salient feature of this sound, as it has been for /ᴅ/. In fact, the lips appear to be relatively relaxed during the production of bilabial trills (Rangelov 2019), and the intraoral pressure is likely too low[15] to suggest an abrupt plosive release.[16] In the current work the prenasalised bilabial trills are described and transcribed as trilling segments without a superscript annotation of a plosive release, that is [^{m}ʙ].

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[15] Low intraoral pressure is in fact an integral part of Maddieson's (1989) hypothesis on the aerodynamic conditions that led to the emergence of bilabial trills historically, which is likely also the case for Ahamb's bilabial trills (Rangelov & Barbour 2019).

[16] Thus, /ᴅ/ and /ʙ/ appear to differ in their manner of articulation when it comes to the mechanism of the first release of the oral closure. Besides the palatographic study suggested above, useful future work may include measurements of the intraoral pressure associated with these two sounds.

/naʙu/ 'bamboo'
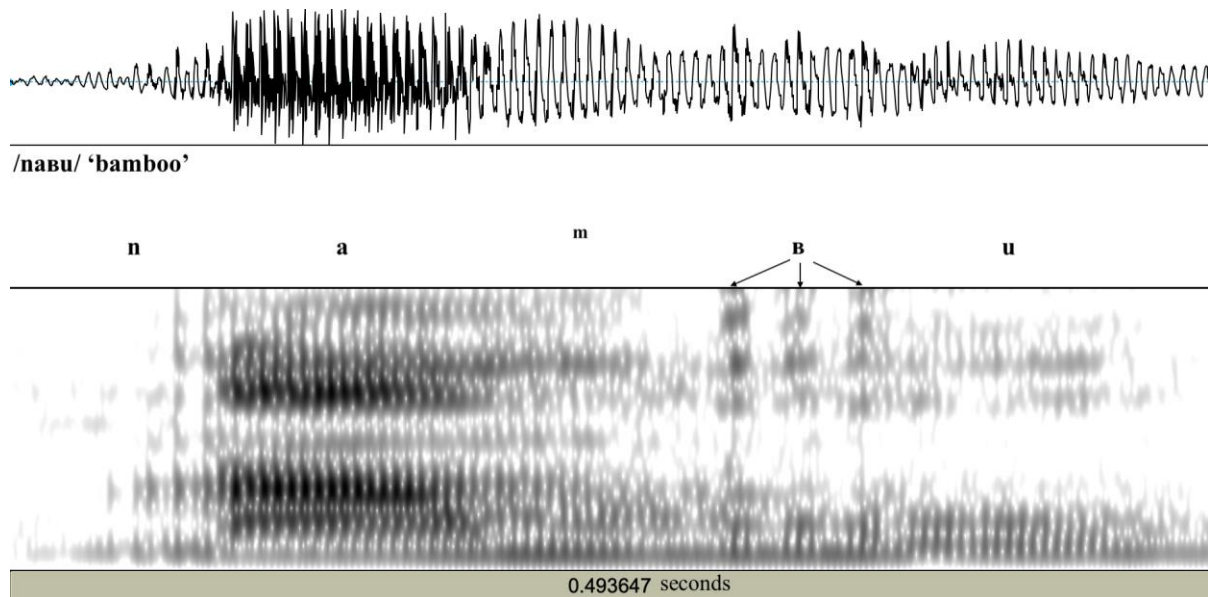
Figure 2-2. Spectrogram and waveform for the word /naʙu/ 'bamboo' uttered by a 35-year-old female speaker

In Ahamb, the trilling section of a prenasalised bilabial trill often partially or completely overlaps with the following vowel. This has been attested in other languages where such trills are present and trilling could be regarded as a modification of the following vowel (Ladefoged & Maddieson 1996: 130). For example, for Kejom (Babanki), a language of Cameroon, Faytak & Akumbu (2020) describe a bilabial trill as a possible pronunciation of a /bʉ/ sequence and treat the trill as an allophone of the vowel rather than an allophone of the consonant.

/ʙ/ has a complementary devoiced allophone [ᵐʙ̥] word finally. Devoicing is restricted to the trilling section; the prenasalisation section does not appear to undergo devoicing: /nxaʙ/ 'fire' [nxaᵐʙ̥].

The plain bilabial trill /ᴩ/ is articulated in a similar way as its prenasalised counterpart, but it has no nasal portion. Instead, it involves a long oral closure followed by a release and up to three additional oscillations of the lips. Figure 2-3 demonstrates a spectrogram and waveform of an instance of /ᴩ/, where at least three distinct oscillations of the lips follow a long oral closure.

50
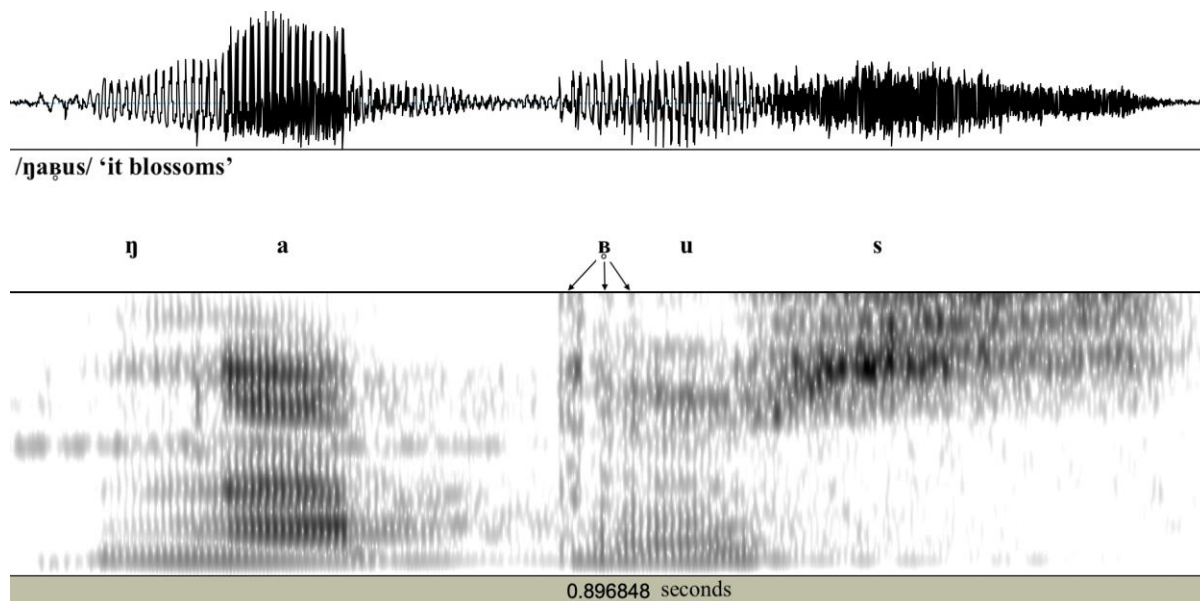
Figure 2-3. Spectrogram and waveform for the word /ŋaʙus/ 'it blossoms' uttered by a 35-year-old female speaker

Typologically, trills often have non-trilled pronunciations as variants, since the tight aerodynamic conditions for trilling to occur are not always met (Ladefoged & Maddieson 1996: 217). Two general types of variants of bilabial trills have been observed in Ahamb – fricative-like and plosive-like release.[17] Figure 2-4 shows a spectrogram and waveform for the word /naʙut/ 'deaf person' pronounced by a 35-year-old female speaker demonstrating a bilabial trill variant with a tap-like release followed by a period that could be considered to involve friction before the vowel formants stabilise.

In a detailed study of Ahamb's bilabial trills, Rangelov (2019)[18] found that successful trilling with at least two oscillations of the lips was observed where expected in up to 60% of tokens with /ʙ/, where the tokens were produced in isolation. Success rates were lower for /ᴘ/ and for both phonemes in connected speech. The same study found that interspeaker variation with regard to the rates of success of trilling was substantial, with some speakers almost always producing successful trills and others virtually never doing so. This may suggest that the status of bilabial trills in Ahamb is unstable and they may be in the process of being lost.

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[17] This is in line with observations for other languages with bilabial trills, e.g. Dimock (2005) calls variants of bilabial trills in Unua, another Malekula language, "one-tap trills"; Yoder (2010) calls variants of bilabial trills in Nias, a language spoken in Indonesia, "stops with fricated release."

[18] Audio and video examples demonstrating unsuccessful trills were included in this work and can be found in bundle [ahb700] of the Ahamb Language Corpus (Rangelov 2020): https://elar.soas.ac.uk/Record/MPI1271824/
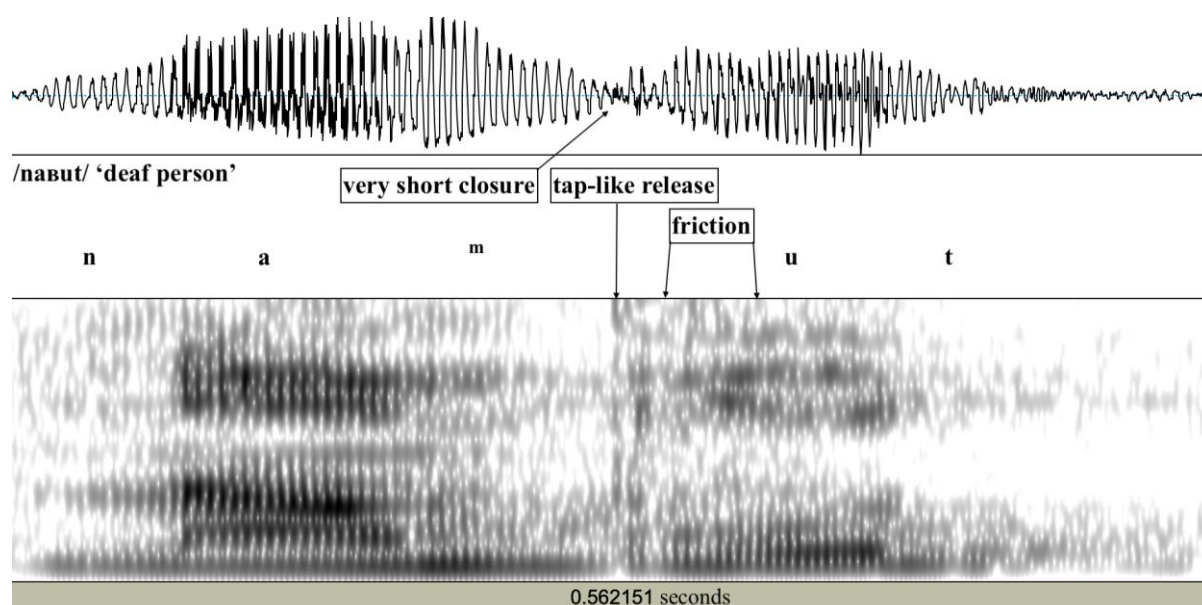
Figure 2-4. Spectrogram and waveform for the word /naʙut/ 'deaf person' uttered by a 35-year-old female speaker, illustrating an unsuccessful prenasalised bilabial trill

2.2.6 Lateral approximant /l/

The lateral approximant /l/ involves contact at the alveolar ridge. The sets in (2.22) demonstrate the contrast between /l/ and other consonants with a similar place of articulation.

(2.22)	Contrasts between /l/ and other coronal consonants		
/l/	/lov/ [lof] 'pour'	/leb/ [leᵐp] 'be big'	
/r/	/rov/ [rof] 'block'	/reb/ [reᵐp] 'simply'	
/ᴅ/	/ᴅov/ [ⁿᵈrof] 'close to'		
/s/	/sov/ [sof] 'soap'		
/t/	/tov/ [tof] 'stay'		
/n/	/nov/ [nof] 'think'		

2.2.7 Central approximants /j, w/

The approximants /j, w/ only appear before or after a vowel. The contrast between /j, w/ and similar consonants is demonstrated in (2.23).

(2.23)	Contrast between /j, w/ and similar consonants			
a.	/j/ vs /tʃ/	[**ja**ŋjaŋ] 'be orange'	[**tʃ**aŋ] 'lay'
		[xa**j**] 'wood'	[xa**tʃ**] 'bite'
b.	/w/ vs /v/	[**w**er] 'be grey (hair)'	[**v**er] 'hand'
		[bar**w**on] 'fight'	[nar**v**on] 'tooth'
		[xa**w**] 'rope'	[xa**v**] 'finish'

The segment /j/ has been attested before or after /a, e, o, u/. In prevocalic position /j/ can serve as the syllable onset on its own as in (2.24a), or it can be preceded by another consonant as in (2.24b).

(2.24)	Examples of /j/ in prevocalic position
a.	/jaljal/ [jal.jal] 'be tall, be high'
	/jaŋjaŋ/ [jaŋ.jaŋ] 'be orange'
	/jaxolv/ [ja.xolf] 'pour out'
	/jesjes/ [jes.jes] 'bail out'
	/jov/ [jof] 'dive'
	/xajug/ [xa.juŋk] 'you'
b.	/naᴅjaw/ [na.ⁿᵈrjaw] 'coconut crab'[19]
	/naʙjag/ [na.ᵐʙjaŋk] 'taro'[20]
	/sju/ [sju] 'fish hook'
	/njut/ [njut] 'youth' (from Bisl. *yut*, with accreted article /n-/ (see §3.3.2.1))

In postvocalic position /j/ cannot occur before other consonants in the same syllable:

(2.25)	Examples of /j/ in postvocalic position
	/aj/ [aj] 'ᴇᴍᴘ; ᴅᴇᴍ.ᴘʀɴ'
	/xaj/ [xaj] 'wood, tree'
	/xajvur/ [xaj.vur] 'old man'
	/gmaj/ [ᵑgmaj] 'come'
	/svej/ [svej] 'what'
	/woj/ [woj] 'water'
	/vuj/ [vuj] 'be good'
	/navujin/ [na.vuj.in] 'goodness'

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[19] In /naᴅjaw/ and /naʙjag/ the nasal section of the prenasalised consonant can also be considered to occupy the empty coda of the first syllable, see Footnote 10 in §2.2.2.

[20] In spectrograms there is a very short /u/-like transition phase between /ʙ/ and /j/, which can be attributed to an overlap between the trilling phase (involving rounded lips, similar to an /u/ sound) and the semivowel articulation.

In prevocalic position, /w/ has been attested before /a, o, e/, as demonstrated by the examples in (2.26a). In borrowings, /w/ has also been attested before /i, u/, among other vowels (2.26b). /w/ has not been attested before or after /ə, y, ø/.

(2.26)	Examples of /w/ in prevocalic position
a.	/wawa/ [wa.wa] 'brother
	/syrwaj/ [syr.waj] 'eternity'
	/gwan/ [ᵑgwan] 'be tight'
	/naʙwas/ [na.ᵐʙwas] 'pig'
	/ᴅwan/ [ⁿᵈrwan] 'with'
	/rwag/ [rwaᵑk] 'stand up'
	/woj/ [woj] 'water'
	/wog/ [woᵑk] 'canoe'
	/lwoj/ [lwoj] 'river'
	/lwon/ [lwon] 'uncle, nephew'
	/malwen/ [mal.wen] 'tongue'
	/xalwen/ [xal.wen] 'neck'
	/tətwen/ [tət.wen] 'illustrate'
b.	/win/ [win] 'win'
	/wil/ [wil] 'wheel'
	/wev/ [wev] 'wave'
	/wik/ [wik] 'week'
	/lanwis/ [lanwis] 'language, vernacular'
	/wof/ [wof] 'wharf'
	/flawa/ [flawa] 'flower'
	/was/ [was] 'wash'
	/wud/ [wud] 'wood'

In postvocalic position, /w/ is restricted to after /a/ and normally word-finally, as demonstrated in (2.27a). The example in (2.27b) is the only attested example of postvocalic /w/ followed by a consonant.

(2.27)	Examples of /w/ in postvocalic position
a.	/xanaw/ [xa.naw] 'I'
	/mᴅaw/ [mⁿᵈraw] 'little'
	/xaw/ [xaw] 'rope'
	/kaw/ [kaw] 'hunt'
	/təgaw/ [tə.ᵑgaw] 'hold'
	/nagaw/ [na.ᵑgaw] 'spider, spider web'
	/mataw/ [ma.taw] 'axe'
	/naᴅjaw/ [na.ⁿᵈrjaw] 'coconut crab'
b.	/rawn/ [rawn] 'leaf'

The data in (2.28) demonstrates that historically, /j, w/ appear to have developed from either consonants (2.28a) or vowels (2.28b).[21] In the case of /naʙjag/ 'taro', the PNCV reconstruction *buaŋga (*biaŋga) suggests a possible phonological diphthong.

(2.28)	Historical origins of /j, w/	
	token	PNCV (Clark 2009)
a.	/xaj/ 'tree'	< *kaɟu
	/xaw/ 'rope'	< *kaɣo
	/jesjes/ 'scoop up, bail'	< *ʔasu-vi
b.	/naʙwas/ 'pig'	< *bukasi
	/naʙjag/ 'taro'	< *buaŋga (*biaŋga)

From a typological point of view, /j, w/ can be phonologically part of the syllable onset or coda (that is they are consonants) or part of the syllable nucleus (being part of a diphthong). Their status can be determined by a number of tests, such as phonotactic constraints and morphophonological processes (e.g. Cheon 2002: 627-628). Stress patterns and diachronic data can also provide evidence. Certain phonetic cues have also been proposed, such as length and first formant frequencies (see Billington 2017: 226-228 for an overview).

A few criteria were applied to Ahamb's data to try to determine the phonological status of /j, w/. Firstly, the syllable structure of Ahamb (see §2.4.1) means that there are no phonotactic constraints on /j, w/ appearing in the onset or coda of a syllable. In fact, there appears to be a tendency for disfavouring empty syllable codas (see Footnote 10 in §2.2.2).[22] Secondly, the stress pattern presented in Figure 2-9 in §2.6.1 (that stress can be on the penult when its nucleus is /a/), suggests that /j/ in words like /ˈxaj.vur/ 'old man' is part of the syllable coda; otherwise the stress rule would have to be further elaborated to include hypothetical diphthongs, making it more complex and less economical. Thirdly, the restrictions on what vowels can occur before or after /j, w/ are mostly limited to /ə, y, ø/, which appear to be somewhat recent innovations in Ahamb. This relatively unrestricted distribution suggests that /w, j/ are consonantal. Lastly, the historical evidence presented in (2.28) suggests that /j, w/ are reflexes of historical consonants, in at least some cases. Provided with the above evidence, /j, w/ are here treated as consonants and part of the onset/coda of syllables. This

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[21] All examples suggest the loss of a final vowel, which appears to be a regular diachronic process in Ahamb, also reported by Charpentier (1982: 65) and Lynch (2014).

[22] This is likely related to the historical process of final vowel loss, see Footnote 21.

analysis appears to be more economical than allowing for diphthongs in the syllable nucleus. Future research on the phonetic properties of /j, w/ may shed more light on their exact status.

2.2.8 Labiovelar allophones of /m, b, p, v/

Labiovelar labial segments are common in the languages of Malekula and Vanuatu, including Uluveu (Healey 2013: 12), Unua, where they are only attested in the speech of older speakers (Pearce 2015: 22), Tape (Crowley 2006d: 100), Uripiv (McKerras 2001: 1), Avava (Crowley 2006a: 25), Neve'ei (Musgrave 2007: 6), Lolovoli (Hyslop 2001: 28), Daakie (Krifka 2015) and Daakaka (von Prince 2015). In these languages they very commonly occur before the front high vowels /i, e/. Such segments have been reconstructed as contrastive for PNCV (Clark 2009: 10) and POc (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 63).

These sounds have also been attested in some Ahamb words, but there is little evidence to consider them phonemic. When asked to articulate these words slowly, Ahamb speakers generally reject the labiovelar variants and enunciate the words with the plain variants instead.

In Ahamb, labiovelar variants have only been attested before /i, e, ə/. Examples are listed in (2.29). Note that no examples of labiovelar /p/ [pʷ] have been attested before /e/ and no examples of labiovelar /b/ [ᵐbʷ] have been attested before /i/. Before /ə/, the only labiovelar sound that has been attested is /v/ [vʷ].

Many common words containing sequences of /m, b, p, v/ and /i, e, ə/ have not been attested with labiovelar variants. This is also true for borrowings. Some examples are listed in (2.30).

The only near-minimal pair, where labiovelarisation could hypothetically be considered contrastive is presented in (2.31).

(2.29)	Examples of tokens pronounced with labiovelar variants	
	token	labiovelar pronunciation
mʷe	/sysmel/ 'be cold'	[sysˈmʷel]
	/namer/ 'snake'	[namʷer]
pʷe	-	-
ᵐbʷe	/naben/ 'mat'	[naᵐbʷen]
vʷe	/naven/ 'fruit'	[navʷen]/[naβʷen]
	/ven/ 'to carry fruit'	[vʷen]/[βʷen]
	/veve/ 'auntie'	[vʷevʷe]/[βʷeβʷe]
	/nave/ 'joking'	[navʷe]/[naβʷe]

mʷi	/nakemkemin/ 'happiness'	[nacemceˈmʷin]
pʷi	/pitrox/ 'be unripe'	[pʷitrox]
ᵐbʷi	-	-
vʷi	/tavin/ 'brother-in-law'	[tavʷin]/[taβʷin]
	/lavlavis/ 'play'	[lavlaˈvʷis]/[lavlaˈβʷis]
	/navilaxlax/ 'silver-eared honey eater'	[navʷilaxlax]/[naβʷilaxlax]
	/vinvinu/ 'be crazy'	[vʷinvʷinu]/[βʷinβʷinu]
vʷə	/vər/ 'buy'	[vʷər]
	/rəvəx/ 'middle'	[rəvʷəx]

(2.30) Examples of sequences of /m, b, p, v/ + /i, e, ə/
that do not have labiovelar variants

/mev/ [mef] 'be heavy'
/rm-en/ [rmen] 'father-3SG'
/pen/ [pen] 'down'
/be-n/ [ᵐben] 'body-3SG'
/ve/ [ve] 'weave'
/bi/ [ᵐbi] 'where; NEGMOD'
/biskit/ [ᵐbiscit] 'bisquit' (Bisl.)
/mi/ [mi] 'again'
/likopit/ [lokopit] 'dolphin'
/vi/ [vi] 'COP'

(2.31) Near-minimal pair with contrastive labiovelarisation

/aven/ [aven] 'REL'   not pronounced with labiovelarisation
/naven/ [naven]/[navʷen] 'fruit'   pronounced either with or without labiovelar /v/

The fact that in some tokens these sequences allow labiovelar pronunciations but in others
they do not, may point to a historical explanation for the presence of these allophones. In
Ahamb, labiovelar segments appear to have merged with their respective plain counterparts,
but the labiovelar sounds have remained as free allophones, at least in some tokens. Some
examples and their reconstructions are listed in (2.32). Note that Clark (2009) spells the
labiovelar segments as digraphs (rather than using superscripts). In the case of Ahamb's [vʷə]
sequences, they appear to originate from /v/ before /o, u/ rather than from a labiovelar *vw*.

(2.32) PNCV reconstructions of Ahamb tokens, for which labiovelar variants have been attested

PNCV (Clark 2009)	Ahamb labiovelar variant	gloss
*mwata	[mʷer]	'snake'
*bwaru	[pʷit.rox]	'be unripe'
*bwana	[ᵐbʷen]	'mat'
*vwa	[vʷen]	'fruit, bear fruit'
*tau-wia	[tavʷin]	'brother-in-law'
*voli	[vʷər]	'buy'
*livuka	[rəvʷəx]	'middle'

On the other hand, Ahamb tokens that do not have labiovelar variants tend to be reflexes of non-labiovelar PNCV consonants:

(2.33) PNCV reconstructions of Ahamb tokens, for which labiovelar variants have not been attested

PNCV (Clark 2009)	Ahamb	gloss
*mava	/mev/ [mef]	'be heavy'
*abe	/be-n/ [ᵐben]	'body-3SG'
*bea	/bi/ [ᵐbi]	'where'
*vai	/vi/ [vi]	'COP'
*tama	/rm-en/ [rmen]	'father-3SG'
*ma=masa	/mes/ [mes]	'dry'
*mana	/menmen/ [menmen]	'laugh'
*marama	/mir/ [mir]	'light'

2.2.9 Other consonants

There are two consonants that occur in Ahamb speech, but have not been described above. One is the glottal stop, which is attested in the word [eʔe] 'yes'. The other one is the glottal fricative [h], which occurs in borrowings from Bislama such as [hao] 'how' or [haricen] 'cyclone'. Due to their limited distribution, these consonants are not described as part of Ahamb's phonemic inventory.

2.3 Vowels

Ahamb has eight vowel phonemes, which are presented in Table 2-2. This vowel inventory is richer than what is typical for Oceanic or Vanuatu languages (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002;

Clark 2009). The five vowels reconstructed for the protolanguages (/a, e, o, u, i/) are complemented by the schwa vowel, which appears in a number of other Malekula languages, such as Uluveu (Healey 2013) and other South Malekula languages (Charpentier 1982: 65), Naman (Crowley 2006b), Uripiv (McKerras 2001; Moore 2019) and V'ënen Taut (Fox 1979; Dodd 2014), and the front rounded vowels /y, ø/, which have been attested (usually as allophones of other phonemes) in other related languages such as Uluveu (Healey 2013), Lamap (Williams 2019) and other South Malekula languages (Charpentier 1982: 65), Neverver (Barbour 2012), Nati (Crowley 1998: 108), Daakie (Krifka 2015) and Vurës (Malau 2016: 20).

Table 2-2. Vowel contrasts

	Front		Back
High	i y		u
Mid	e ø	ə	o
Low		a	

The front rounded vowels /y, ø/ have somewhat limited distribution (see §2.4.4.) but there is evidence that they are contrastive. Section 2.3.1 briefly describes the articulatory properties of Ahamb's vowels. Section 2.3.2 lists contrastive sets and minimal pairs to demonstrate the phonemic status of the vowels. Some attested allophony is described in §2.3.3.

2.3.1   Articulatory properties

Vowel length is not contrastive in Ahamb. The plotting of vowels for three speakers in tokens between oral coronal consonants in Figure 2-5 shows a small overlap between the back vowels /u, o/. The pronunciation of /o/ varied between speakers; /o/ was significantly higher in the speech of one speaker (a 23-year-old male) compared the two other speakers (both female). Considerable variation was observed in the pronunciation of /ə/, which tends to be a mid-high, rather than a mid vowel.
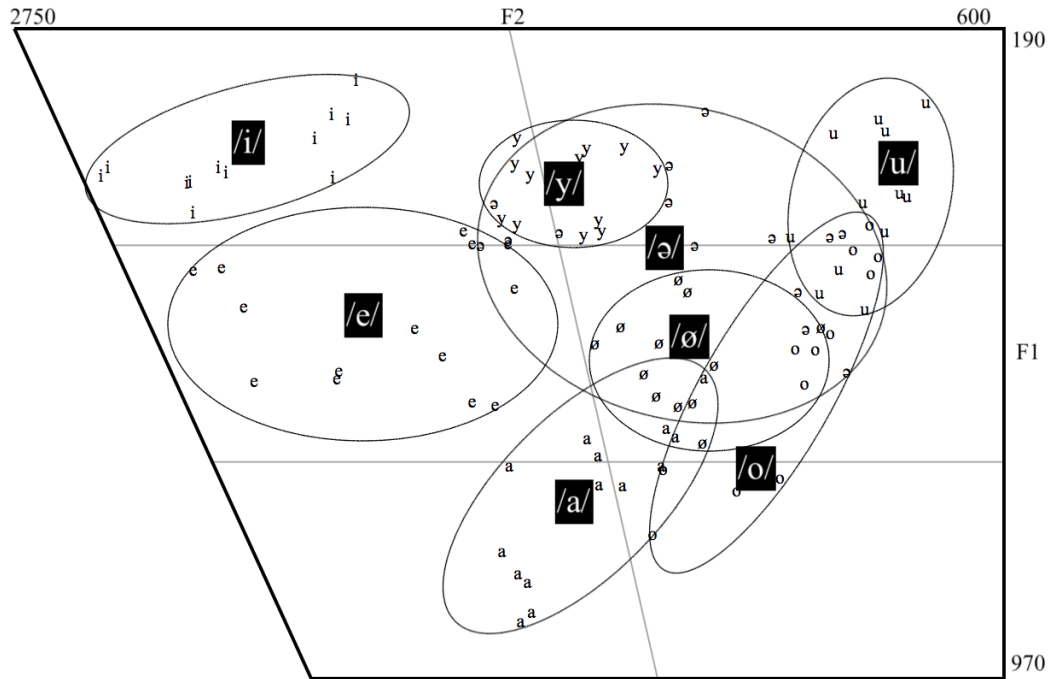
Figure 2-5. A plot of the first and second formants of Ahamb's vowels between oral coronal consonants in tokens uttered in isolation by three speakers aged 23, 35 and 36. Two examples were used for each vowel. Measurements were performed for two repetitions of each word for each speaker, resulting in 12 tokens per vowel.

2.3.2   Vowel contrasts

Minimal pairs demonstrating vowel contrasts are presented below, based on height (2.34), frontness (2.35) and roundedness (2.36).

(2.34)	Vowel height distinctions		
/i/ vs /e/	[mir] 'light'	[mer] 'snake'	
	[vi] 'be'	[ve] 'weave'	
/e/ vs /a/	[per] 'pick up'	[par] 'not have'	
/y/ vs /ø/	[myrmyr] 'be disgusting'	[mørmør] 'be ripe'	
	[lys] 'lose'	[løs] 'wash (oneself)'	
/u/ vs /o/	[kutʃ] 'break'	[kotʃ] 'recognise'	
/u/ vs /ə/	[pus] 'ask'	[pəs] 'tighten'	
/o/ vs /a/	[por] 'break	[par] 'not have'	
	[rox] 'stay'	[rax] 'get married'	
/ə/ vs /a/	[pəs] 'tighten'	[pas] 'give birth'	
	[pər] 'diarrhoea'	[par] 'not have'	
/ø/ vs /a/	[nøf] 'burn'	[naf] 'be enough'	

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(2.35)	Vowel frontness distinctions		
/u/ vs /y/	[pus] 'ask'	[pys] 'whistle'	
/u/ vs /i/	[ru] 'be two'	[ri] 'thing'	
/o/ vs /ə/	[por] 'break'	[pər] 'diarrhoea'	
	[narox] 'I stay'	[narəx] 'small one'	
/o/ vs /ø/	[mor] 'shade'	[mør] 'be ripe'	
	[nof] 'think'	[nøf] 'burn'	
/o/ vs /e/	[por] 'break'	[per] 'pick up'	
/ə/ vs /ø/	[ləf] 'pull'	[løf] 'pour'	
/ə/ vs /e/	[sər] 'retell'	[ser] 'road'	
	[xər] 'dig'	[her] 'octopus'	

(2.36)	Vowel roundedness distinctions		
/i/ vs /y/	[vitʃ] 'dig'	[vytʃ] 'banana'	
/e/ vs /ø/	[mer] 'black'	[mør] 'be ripe'	

2.3.3 Vowel allophony

Both complementary and free allophony has been observed in Ahamb's vowel system. This section describes the observed variation, including nasalisation, raising and fronting of vowels. Extra short variants of some vowels have also been observed, usually in connection with syncope or what appears to be an ongoing process of the deletion of some vowels.

2.3.3.1   *Nasal variants*

All Ahamb vowels have nasalised variants before nasal consonants (anticipatory nasalisation) or after nasal consonants (carryover nasalisation). Only anticipatory nasalisation has been observed in connection with prenasalised consonants, since the nasal phase of prenasalised consonants is at the beginning of their articulation and is abruptly interrupted once the plosive/trilling phrase begins (see §2.2.5.2). Figure 2-6 shows a spectrogram and waveform of the word /niŋe/ 'Canarium nut (Canarium indicum)' where nasal airflow is present throughout the word. The recording used to create this graph captured the relative intensity of sound exiting the nasal and oral cavities in different channels, using an accessible field method described by Stewart & Kohlberger (2017).[23] The waveform shows nasal airflow

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[23] The method involves the use of a pair of affordable earbud headphones that are plugged into the microphone input of the recording device. One earbud is held in front of the mouth and the other one in front of one of the

throughout the word and oral airflow only during the vowel segments. The nasality effect on the /i/ vowel can be attributed to both carryover and anticipatory nasalisation, while the nasality of /e/ is a result of carryover from the preceding /ŋ/.
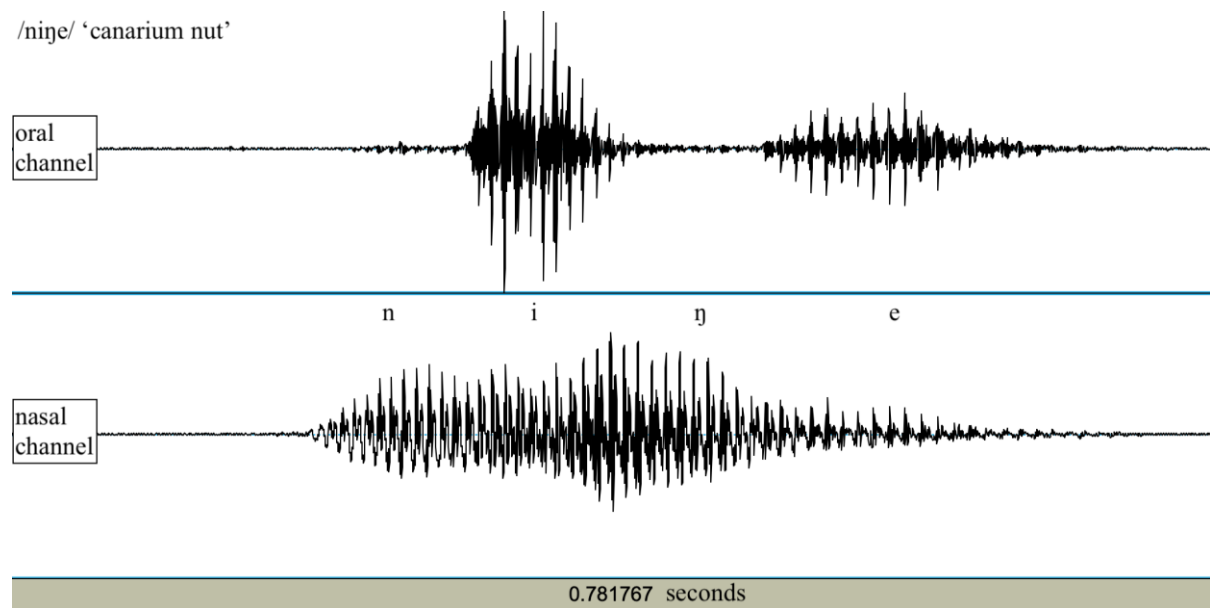
/niŋe/ 'canarium nut'

Figure 2-6. Anticipatory and carryover nasalisation in the word /niŋe/ 'Canarium nut (Canarium indicum)'. The relative intensity of sound exiting the nasal and oral cavities are shown in different channels.

Anticipatory nasalisation on the vowel can be a distinguishing cue after nasal consonant apheresis, e.g. in the third-person singular subject index /ŋa-/, see §2.2.1 for elaboration.

2.3.3.2   *Centralisation of /i/*

The high front vowel /i/ has been observed as an optional high central allophone [ɨ]. Some examples are listed in (2.37). The trigger of this allophone may be in part the following alveolar consonant /t, r/ or the preceding labiovelarisation in the case of the last example.

(2.37)

Examples of centralised /i/: [ɨ]	
token	variant with [ɨ]
/ti-rəs/ '3PL.IRR-see'	[tɨrəs]
/namir/ 'light'	[namɨr]
/vanbir/ 'an Ahamb surname'	[vanᵐbɨr]
/pitrox/ 'be unripe'	[pʷɨtrox]

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nostrils. The resulting stereo recording contains a lot of noise but the difference in relative intensity is clearly visible on the waveform. The method is described in more detail in Stewart & Kohlberger (2017). Investigations of prenasalisation in Ahamb using the same method are discussed in Rangelov (2019).

2.3.3.3　Fronting of back vowels

Free variation between a back rounded vowel and its corresponding front rounded vowel has been observed in some words when the vowels are adjacent to alveolar consonants. The examples in (2.38) demonstrate variation between [u] and [y] (2.38a) and between [o] and [ø] (2.38b). In all cases, the back vowel is considered the more common pronunciation. Fronting of back vowels triggered by alveolar consonants has been observed in other Vanuatu languages, e.g. Daakie (Krifka 2011: 49).

(2.38)	Examples of fronting of back vowels		
	token	back vowel variant	front vowel variant
a.	/varus/ 'paddle'	[varus]	[varys]
	/rur/ 'make thatch roof'	[rur]	[ryr]
b.	/tʃol/ 'peel'	[tʃol]	[tʃøl]
	/lov/ 'pour'	[lof]	[løf]
	/lo/ 'wake up'	[lo]	[lø]

2.3.3.4　Roundedness variation

Two words have been attested to vary rounded and unrounded front vowels. This is, however, not a systematic variation in the language.

(2.39)	Examples of vowel roundedness variation
	[mitʃmitʃ] ~ [mytʃmytʃ] 'wet'
	[letu] ~ [løtu] 'worship'

2.3.3.5　Extra short /ə, u/

As previously mentioned, vowel length is not distinctive in Ahamb. However, a number of cases have been observed where an extra short vowel alternates with a regular vowel or no vowel segment. This is normally observed with /ə/. A similar phenomenon is observed with /u/ word-finally after /v/.

Extra short /ə/ can alternate with a variant where /ə/ has normal length in some tokens:

(2.40)	Examples of normal /ə/ alternating with extra short /ə/		
	token	variant with normal /ə/	variant with extra short /ə/
	/napnevər/ 'woman'	[naˈpneβər]	[naˈpneβə̆r]
	/kabəl/ 'lightning'	[ˈkaᵐbəl]	[ˈkaᵐbə̆l]
	/naʙəx/ 'unicorn fish'	[naˈᵐʙəx]	[naˈᵐʙə̆x]

In other cases, tokens with extra short /ə/ can alternate with tokens where the vowel has been deleted. This is observed regularly in nouns with the (mostly optional) accreted article /n-/ (see §3.3.2). Some examples are given in (2.41). For example, the word /nren/ 'man' has not been attested with a normal-length vowel between /n/ and /r/, but has been attested with extra short /ə/ or without a vowel. In the vowelless variant, the previous consonant is sometimes syllabic; when speakers are asked to syllabify the word, they commonly split it into two syllables. These tendencies are also reflected in one of the few previously available publications in Ahamb (Reuben 2012), where the same word is sometimes spelled as <nren> and other times as <ne̲ren>. Variants with extra short /ə/ also alternate with variants with no vowel (and syllabic consonant) in reduced subject indexes (see §§8.2.1.2, 8.2.1.3).

(2.41) Examples of extra short /ə/ alternating with no vowel

token	variant without /ə/	variant with extra short /ə/
/nren/ 'man'	[nren] / [n̩ˈren]	[nə̆ˈren]
/nbe-n/ 'body-3SG'	[nᵐben] / [n̩.ˈᵐben]	[nə̆ˈᵐben]
/nman/ 'bird'	[nman] / [n̩.ˈman]	[nə̆ˈman]
/nras/ 'sea'	[nras] / [n̩.ˈras]	[nə̆ˈras]
/nran/ 'ground'	[nran] / [n̩.ˈran]	[nə̆ˈran]
/npep/ 'book'	[npep] / [n̩.ˈpep]	[nə̆ˈpep]

For some (mostly younger) speakers, the lack of vowel between /n/ and /r/ in words such as /nren/, /nran/ and /nras/ creates conditions for reanalysis of the /nr/ sequence as /D/ (see §2.5.6).

Word-finally, /u/ can be extra short or completely omitted after /v/. The fricative is then pronounced as the bilabial [β], which is then usually slightly longer than in other contexts. This phenomenon was discussed in §2.2.3.1 in connection with the allophones of /v/. A possible explanation is that the loss of the vowel is compensated for by the extra duration of the [β] consonant.

(2.42) Alternations between short vowel and vowel omission in /vu#/ sequences

token	short vowel variant	no vowel variant
/nivu/ 'turtle'	[ˈniβŭ]	[niβˑ]
/vavu/ 'grandparent'	[ˈvaβŭ] / [ˈβaβŭ]	[vaβˑ] / [βaβˑ]
/vuvu/ 'be new'	[ˈvuβŭ] / [ˈβuβŭ]	[vuβˑ] / [βuβˑ]
/nraᵑg ravu/ 'k.o. insect'	[ˈnraᵑg ˈraβŭ]	[ˈnraᵑg ˈraβˑ]

Ahamb's extra short vowels provide evidence for an ongoing process of vowel loss. It has been hypothesised that vowels, especially word-final vowels have been lost in Ahamb and other neighbouring languages (Charpentier 1982: 65; Lynch 2014). For example, prenasalised bilabial trills resulted from *^{m}bu sequences (Rangelov & Barbour 2019) and the contemporary word-final /^{m}ʙ/ in Ahamb is a result of subsequent word-final vowel loss. In Ahamb, vowel loss appears to not be restricted to only word-final position. A case in point is the POc article *na (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002) and its reflex /n-/ in Ahamb, as in the word /nren/ described above. The reanalysis of /nr/ sequences as /ᴅ/ in the speech of some (mostly younger) speakers suggests that a process of vowel loss in that item might be nearing its completion.

2.4 Phonotactics

This section describes the canonical syllable structure and the attested phonotactic constraints.

2.4.1 Canonical syllable structure

Ahamb has a (C)(C)V(C)(C) canonical syllable structure:

(2.43) $\boxed{\sigma \rightarrow (C)(C)V(C)(C)}$

The data in (2.44) show examples of the different combinatorial outcomes of this pattern.

(2.44)		Variations on the basic syllable structure pattern in Ahamb		
a.	V	/i-/ '3SG.IRR'	/aˈi/ 'here
		/a/ 'PERS; LOC'	/o/ 'or' (Bisl.)
		/u/ 'rise (for tide)'	/aˈtu.a/ 'God' (from Samoan)
b.	CV	/lo/ 'wake up'	/ᴅe/ 'blood'
		/vi/ 'be'	/wa.wa/ 'brother'
		/xa/ 'PROX'	/ma.ru/ 'coconut'
c.	CCV	/sly/ 'clothes'	/mto/ '2PL'
		/mru/ '2DU'	/sju/ 'fish hook'
d.	VC	/im/ 'village'	/ŋaˈil/ 'NSG'
		/ur/ 'place'	/maˈur/ 'be alive'
		/ix/ 'fish'	/aj/ 'EMP'
		/in/ 'DIST'	/ej/ 'INTJ'
		/is/ 'scream'	/ol/ 'old man' (< Bisl. *olfala* 'old, old man')
e.	VCC	N/A	
f.	CVC	/tys/ 'tear'	/vuj/ 'be good'
		/gas/ 'work'	/wog/ 'canoe'
		/bur/ 'hole'	/wer.wer/ 'be grey (hair)'
		/ᴘus/ 'foam'	/jov/ 'dive'
		/woj/ 'water'	/jes.jes/ 'bail out'
		/xaw/ 'rope'	/jal.jal/ 'be high'
		/xaj/ 'tree'	
g.	CVCC	/tams/ 'hit'	/xavtʃ/ 'cover'
		/rawn/ 'leaf'	
h.	CCVC	/tvax/ 'break, hatch'	/rmatʃ/ 'evil spirit'
		/brav/ 'breadfruit'	/gmaj/ 'come'
		/lvar/ 'answer'	/svej/ 'what'
		/mtan/ 'hide'	/mᴅaw/ 'little'
		/mlaᴅ/ 'k.o. tree'	/lwoj/ 'river'
		/xmar/ 'clan'	/ᴅjaw/ 'coconut crab'
		/rwag/ 'stand up'	/ʙjag/ 'taro'
		/ʙwas/ 'pig'	
i.	CCVCC	/mraxs/ 'forbid, ban'	/frantʃ/ 'french' (Engl.)
			/trams/ 'try' (Bisl.)

The data in (2.44) shows no examples of VCC syllable structure. This is likely a consequence of two apparent restrictions:

- Vowel-initial syllables are generally uncommon. Even though V and VC syllables have been attested, they appear to be rather restricted – V syllables are found in the few forms listed in (2.44a), which include some bound morphemes and borrowings.

Similarly, only a handful of examples of VC syllables have been attested, in which the nucleus is restricted to the high vowels /i, u/ in indigenous words, except for the special cases of the emphatic marker /aj/ and the interjection /ej/ where /j/ follows /a, e/ (2.44d). In polysyllabic words, any consonants between two vowels are normally syllabified with the second vowel, e.g. [ma.ru] 'coconut', rather than *[mar.u].

- The combinatory possibilities for CC clusters in the coda are significantly more limited than in the onset (see §2.4.3) and CC codas are significantly less common than CC onsets. For example, there is only one indigenous example and a couple of borrowings with CCVCC stem structure (2.44i).

2.4.2 Vowel sequences

Vowel sequences are not common in Ahamb. As discussed in §2.2.7, there is evidence to consider /j, w/ as consonants rather than vowels. There are, however, some examples of vowel sequences, in which there is no gradual transition between the vowels.[24] Such examples are listed in (2.45) below. In all such cases, there is hiatus between the vowels. In some cases, the vowel sequence clearly straddles a syllable break because of the stress pattern, as in (2.45a). In cases where stress is not relevant, such vowel sequences tend to straddle morpheme boundaries, as in (2.45b). In other cases, both stress placement and morpheme boundaries are relevant, as in (2.45c). In the borrowing /aˈtu.a/ 'God' from Samoan in (2.45d), the /ua/ vowel cluster is clearly pronounced as two different syllables.

(2.45)	Vowel sequences in Ahamb	
	example	comment
a.	[aˈi] 'DEM'	
	[ŋaˈil] 'PL'	
	[maˈur] 'be.alive	
b.	[mat.maˈtu.in] 'power'	/mat.maˈtu/ 'be strong' + nominaliser /-in/
	[na.uˈtʃin/ 'language'	/na-/ is the optional accreted article
c.	[naˈur] 'place'	/na-/ is the optional accreted article
	/ŋa-is/ [ŋaˈis] '3SG-scream'	/ŋa-/ is the 3SG subject index
	[liˈur] 'garden'	prefix /li-/ + /ur/ 'place, land'
	/ŋa-u/ [ŋaˈu] '3SG-rise (tide)'	
d.	[aˈtu.a] 'God'	borrowing from Samoan

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[24] It is common for languages to insert a glide- or approximant-like consonants such as [j, w] in vowel sequences, e.g. in South Efate (Thieberger 2006: 65). This is not the case in Ahamb and the vowel sequences described here are pronounced with a clear hiatus.

2.4.3 Combinations of consonants

In Ahamb, clusters of two consonants are much less common in the syllable coda than in its onset. This section looks at the CC clusters that are permissible within the same syllable. Table 2-3 shows CC combinations permitted in syllable onsets. The first consonant (C1) is listed in the rows and the second consonant (C2) – in the columns. No geminate consonants are attested and Ahamb appears to disfavour geminates. When two identical consonant segments appear together across morpheme boundaries, they are pronounced as a single consonant. Consonants are also elided, when they appear next to an identical or similar portion (nasalisation or trilling) of complex segments, as in /nD/, /ng/ or /Dr/ sequences (see §§2.5.3.3, 2.5.3.4)

Table 2-3. CC clusters permitted in syllable onsets.

C1 \ C2	m	n	ŋ	p	t	k	b	d	g	v	s	x	tʃ	P	r	ʙ	D	l	j	w
m		✓			✓						✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓
n	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
ŋ																				
p		✓	✓								✓	✓			✓			✓		
t							✓				✓				✓			✓		✓
k															✓			✓		
b											✓				✓			✓		
d																				
g	✓														✓					✓
v		✓	✓								✓	✓			✓					
s	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
x	✓										✓				✓					
tʃ		✓			✓	✓					✓				✓			✓		✓
P																				
r	✓		✓				✓			✓	✓									✓
ʙ																			✓	✓
D	✓										✓								✓	✓
l										✓										✓
j																				
w																				

It is apparent from the data that Ahamb allows consonant clusters of varying sonority profiles. The Sonority Sequencing Principle (SSP) stipulates that more sonorous sounds tend to be closer to the syllable nucleus while less sonorous sounds tend to be on the periphery. A

version of SSP based on Katamba (1989: 104) and adjusted for Ahamb, is outlined in (2.46). Within the same sonority group, voiced sounds are more sonorous than voiceless sounds.

(2.46) | Sonority Sequencing Principle |
        | vowel > approximant > liquid > nasal > fricative > affricate> plosive |

In Ahamb syllable onsets, two consonants with the same sonority profile can co-occur - most notably two fricatives, e.g. /sxa/ 'year' or two nasals, e.g. /mnatʃ/ 'different', /nman/ 'bird'.

When the two consonants have different sonority profiles, in most cases they obey the SSP. However, there are a number of possible clusters which violate the principle. The following patterns and possible analyses emerge (examples are listed in (2.47)):

- Nasals can precede fricatives, plosives or the affricate /tʃ/ (2.47a). There are numerous examples of /n/ preceding less sonorous consonants in the syllable onset where /n/ is the accreted article (see §3.3.2). As discussed in §2.3.3.5, the accreted article can have different surface representations, including a short schwa and can thus be considered syllabic in some cases. On the other hand, there is evidence for apheresis of /n-/ before prenasalised segments (see §2.5.3.3).

- Liquids can precede nasals, plosives or fricatives (2.47b). The noun stems in this group of examples, often appear with a /na-/ accreted article, in which case resyllabification occurs, breaking the CC onset cluster, e.g. /na-rvon/ [nar.von] 'tooth'.

- /s/ and /tʃ/ can precede a prenasalised plosive (2.47c). In these examples the prenasalisation section (with high sonority) separating the two sections of lower sonority (fricative/affricate and plosive), may provide a chance for "sonority relief." In other words, it can be argued that a separate syllable nucleus (in the form of syllabic consonant or a short (schwa) vowel may be present within what has otherwise been treated as a syllable onset here. In a syllabification experiment with six speakers, four treated /tʃbon/ 'alone' as a one-syllable word, one split the consonant sequence as in [tʃ.ᵐbon] and one split the prenasalised consonant in two with an intervening short schwa: [tʃə̃m.bon].

(2.47)	Examples of sonority-violating consonant clusters in syllable onsets	
a.	C1 = nasal	/mtan/ 'hide'
	C2 = plosive/affricate/fricative	/npep/ 'book'
		/nbe/ 'song'
		/mtʃəg/ 'then'
		/mxar/ 'above'
		/msax/ 'be sick'
		/nvar/ 'stone'
b.	C1 = liquid	/rben/ 'because'
	C2 = nasal/fricative/plosive	/rmatʃ/ 'evil spirit'
		/rŋen/ 'shell'
		/rvon/ 'tooth'
		/lvar/ 'answer'
c.	C1 = fricative/affricate	/sbon/ 'end'
	C2 = prenasalised plosive	/tʃbon/ 'oneself'

Examples of all possibilities of CC clusters in the syllable coda are given in (2.48). The possibilities are mostly limited to the fricative /s/ and the affricate /tʃ/ as C2 with nasals, fricatives or liquids as C1. Additionally, there is one example of /wn/ sequence in the syllable coda. All of the possible syllable coda clusters described here obey the SSP.

(2.48)	Examples of CC clusters in Ahamb syllable codas	
a.	C2 = /s/	/tams/ 'hit'
		/ʙyns/ 'watch'
		/raŋs/ 'cry'
		/mraxs/ 'ban'
		/nars/ 'I see'
b.	C2= /tʃ/	/ʙyntʃ/ 'watch'
		/xavtʃ/ 'cover'
c.	/wn/	/rawn/ 'leaf'

2.4.4 Distribution of /ø, y/

In Ahamb, the front rounded vowels /ø, y/ occur less commonly than the other vowels. They are not very common in the languages of Vanuatu and where they have been attested in other Malekula languages, they are normally variants of other vowels (see §2.3). It is likely that they are relatively recent additions to Ahamb's vowel inventory. Their distribution appears to be constrained to certain phonological environments as can be seen in Figures 2-7 and 2-8 The two front rounded vowels appear most often before and/or after coronal consonants, or

less commonly before or after labial consonants. The only exceptions to this rule involve a morpheme boundary. These are the forms /lø-g/ 'thought-POSS.GNR.1SG' and /ᵐbarvisø-g/ 'shoulder- POSS.GNR.1SG', which include the first person singular possessive suffix /-g/ (see §5.2.1), resulting in a (prenasalised) velar sound after /ø/.

| t, r, ᴅ, l, s, tʃ, n (coronal)
m, v (labial) | + | ø | + | t, r, l, s, n, ᴅ (coronal)
m, ʙ, v (labial)
g |

Figure 2-7. Phonological environment in which /ø/ has been observed

| t, l, r, ᴅ, s, tʃ, n (coronal)
m, ᴘ, ʙ, v, p (labial) | + | y | + | t, l, r, ᴅ, n, s, tʃ (coronal) |

Figure 2-8. Phonological environment in which /y/ has been observed.

(2.49)	Examples of environments in which /ø, y/ occur	
	/ø/	/y/
	/tøtøt/ 'grandfather'	/myn/ 'drink'
	/tʃøl/ 'peel'	/ʙyns/ 'watch'
	/nøʙ/ 'pool'	/ryr/ 'be three'
	/mør/ 'be ripe'	/sys/ 'breast'
	/nøv/ 'burn'	/tyn/ 'hurt'
	/ᴅøᴅ/ 'submerge, sink'	/pyᴅ/ 'be hot'
	/pisør/ 'garden'	/vytʃ/ 'banana'

2.4.5 Constraint on /p, k/ word-finally

The voiceless plosives /p, k/ rarely appear in the syllable coda. /k/ has been attested in final position in only two indigenous words: /lovuk/ 'tomorrow' and /turak/ (village name). Both /p, k/ appear more often in this position in borrowings as shown in (2.50).

(2.50)	Examples of /p, k/ word-finally in borrowings	
	/p/	/k/
	/pep/ 'book, paper'	/bak/ 'bag'
	/sep/ 'shape'	/trak/ 'truck'
	/step/ 'step'	/maniok/ 'cassava'
	/stop/ 'stop'	/kuk/ 'cook'
		/melek/ 'milk'
		/buluk/ 'cow'

However, some word-final /p, k/ in foreign toponyms and borrowings are substituted for the fricatives /v, x/, as seen in (2.51). This is particularly common among older speakers of Ahamb, suggesting that the language generally disfavours /p, k/ word-finally.

(2.51)	/p, k/ fricativised word-finally in foreign toponyms and borrowings	
	/p/	/k/
	/lamap/ (village name) > [lamaf]	/avok/ (island name) > [avox]
		/simok/ 'smoke' (Bisl.) > [simox]

2.5   Phonological processes

A number of regular phonological processes have been observed in Ahamb and they are discussed in the following sections. Some regular phonological processes were discussed in §§2.2, 2.3.3 in the context of complementary allophony. In such cases, reference will be made to the relevant sections.

2.5.1   Neutralisation

The contrast between /m/ and /b/ is optionally neutralised word-finally as discussed in §1.1:

(2.52) /axaᵐb/ 'Ahamb' → [axam]

This process does not normally apply to the prenasalised velar fricative /g/, where a stop is always heard, either with or without audible release (see §2.2.2).

2.5.2   Terminal devoicing

The prenasalised plosives /b, g/ and the labials /v, ʙ/ undergo devoicing at the end of the word. In all cases, these devoiced articulations are complementary allophones. This process does not result in neutralisation of contrast (as terminal devoicing can do typologically),

because the resulting allophones remain contrastive with other phonemes. For the prenasalised sounds /b, g, ʙ/, prenasalisation continues to distinguish these allophones from their respective plain, voiceless counterparts /p, k, ᴘ/; in the case of /v/ the resulting voiceless allophones do not otherwise have phonemic status. The example in (2.53) demonstrates terminal devoicing for /b/. More examples can be found in §§2.2.2, 2.2.3.1, 2.2.5.2.

(2.53) /axaᵐb/ 'Ahamb' → [axaᵐp]

2.5.3   Elision

Elision of both consonants and vowels has been observed in Ahamb. The following subsections describe different elision processes that have been attested in the Ahamb corpus.

2.5.3.1   Vowel elision and coalescence across morpheme boundaries

When two vowels appear next to each other across morpheme boundaries within the same phonological word, any underlying hiatus is eliminated and only a singleton vowel is pronounced, meaning that no lengthening is observed. This is common in combinations of the possessive marker /sa/ and a following noun starting with /a/, which merge resulting in a short [a] sound. Two examples are listed in (2.54a).

When the two adjacent vowels are of different quality, coalescence has been observed, meaning that the resulting singleton vowel is of different quality, as in (2.54b) where the /ia/ sequence results in [e].

(2.54)	Examples of vowel elision	
	underlying form	surface form
a.	/s**a a**bat/	[sa**ᵐ**bat]
	POSS.GNR.CLF foreigner	
	'of foreigners'	
	/s**a a**tua/	[s**a**tua]
	POSS.GNR.CLF God	
	'God's'	
b.	/nar**i a**ven/	[nar**e**ven]
	thing INDF.ART	
	'a thing'	

2.5.3.2   Apheresis of /r/

In the beginning of a word, /r/ is often elided when followed by /b/. This is an optional process and is mostly attested in rapid speech.

(2.55)   Apheresis of /r/
        /rben/ 'because' > [ᵐben]
        /rbarux/ 'girl' > [ᵐbarux]

2.5.3.3   Hypothetical apheresis of /n/

Most common nouns in Ahamb can take the accreted article /na-/ or /n-/, which is usually optional. The shorter variant of the article, /n-/ is generally restricted to #Ca- stems (see §3.3.2.1). Some nouns with /ᴅa-/ and /ga-/ stems appear to never take the accreted article, likely because the resulting cluster of /n/ + prenasalisation does not produce any perceivable lengthening of the nasal component or any other phonetic cue. For example, the word /ᴅam/ 'yam' qualifies for the /n-/ article (rather than the /na-/ article) but it has not been attested with it. For comparison, the word /ᴅu/ 'earthquake', takes the /na-/ article instead and often appears with it as /na-ᴅu/. Similarly, the word /gatʃ/ 'finger' is not attested with the article, but /gur/ 'dry coconut' commonly appears with its accreted article /na-/ as /na-gur/.

This rule does not apply for the other prenasalised sounds /b, ʙ, d/. In the case of /ba-/ stems, a clear transition between a labial and alveolar nasal segment is heard: [nᵐbarme] 'island cabbage'. At least in some cases /n-/ is arguably syllabic (see §2.3.3.5). Noun stems starting with the prenasalised bilabial trill /ʙ/ always take the /na-/ variant of the article (see §3.3.2.1). The segment /d/ is so rare that there are no relevant examples.

2.5.3.4   Syncope of /r, ᴅ/ (degemination)

In the middle of a word, /r/ can be elided when it is preceded by /r, ᴅ/ or followed by /r/. This phenomenon is often observed when the preverbal TAM markers /maᴅ-/ 'IMM.PS', /ro-/ 'IPFV' and /bar-/ 'FUT' appear next to each other or before a stem starting with /r/ (in the case of /bar-/). This means that Ahamb does not allow a geminate trill in these cases. This process of degemination makes it impossible to know whether the commonly used subsequential verbal marker /r-/ is present or absent when it appears before /r/-initial stems or /ro-/ (see §8.4). Two examples are listed in (2.56a) to demonstrate the phenomenon.

On the other hand, when two /D/ sounds appear next to each other across morpheme boundaries, they are both pronounced, usually with a perceived short epenthetic schwa, during which the nasal component of the later /D/ is realised. An example is given in (2.56b). The prenasalised /D/ can be elided in rapid speech before another prenasalised sound as in (2.56c).

(2.56)	Examples of syncope of /r, D/	
	underlying form	surface form
a.	/bar-rox/	[^{m}ba**r**ox]
	FUT-stay	
	'will stay'	
	/ata-ma**D-r**o-porax/	[atamand**r**oporax]
	3PL-IMM.PST-IPFV-be.born	
	'They were just being born.'	
b.	/ŋa-ma**D-D**əm/	[ŋamand**r**ənd**r**əm]
	3SG-IMM.PST-fall	
	'It just fell.'	
c.	/ko**D g**or/	[ko^{ŋ}**g**or]
	cover block	
	'close'	

2.5.3.5 Syncope of /ə/

A schwa /ə/ in the stem of a noun or verb may be elided when a suffix starting with a vowel is added. Most commonly, this is observed when the object index /-i/ is added to a verb stem with /ə/ in the last syllable, as demonstrated by the examples in (2.57). This process is not obligatory but it is very common.

(2.57)	Examples of syncope of /ə/	
	underlying form	surface form
	/rəs-i/ 'see-OBJ'	[rsi] or [rəsi]
	/xər-i/ 'dig-OBJ'	[xri] or [xəri]
	/vən-i/ 'shoot-OBJ'	[vni] or [vəni]
	/təx-i/ 'hit-OBJ'	[txi] or [təxi]
	/tʃaləv-i/ 'shoot-OBJ'	[tʃalvi] or [tʃaləvi]

There is also a small number of nouns in which schwa syncope is attested. The noun /na-**xs**-en/ 'name' consists of the accreted article /na-/ (which appears to be obligatory for this noun), the stem /xs/ and the construct suffix /-en/. This word always appears with the construct suffix (see §5.2.2) or one of the possessive suffixes, which also start with a vowel (/-ag/, /-

am/, /-en/, see §5.2.1) and therefore can also trigger schwa syncope. /naxsen/ is likely a surface representation of the underlying stem /xəs/, which is attested in the semantically related noun /xəs/ 'rank, title; mask', which undergoes schwa syncope when the vowel-initial suffix is added.

Another example is the noun /na-**vr**-ən/ 'hair, feather', in which the obligatory suffixation necessary for direct possession triggers syncope. The underlying vowel surfaces in the related word /na-vər-vər/ 'pubic hair', which is not directly possessed and does not take suffixes to trigger syncope.

2.5.3.6   *Syncope of /e/*

One noun has been attested where /e/ is elided from the stem in a process similar to the schwa syncope described in §2.5.3.5. The word [na-**vr**-en] 'arm, hand' is an inalienable noun and always appears with a construct or possessive suffix starting with a vowel, which triggers syncope. The underlying stem /v**e**r/ is attested in religious contexts (e.g. */naver sa Atua/* 'the hand of God'). The underlying form also surfaces in the verb /təgaver/ 'shake hands', which can be analysed as a compound (/təga/ 'hold' + /ver/ 'hand').

2.5.3.7   *Apocope of /u/*

The vowel /u/ can be deleted after /v/ in word-final position resulting in a lengthening of the consonant, e.g. /nivu/ [niβ·] 'turtle'. The details of this process and more examples were given in §§2.2.3.1, 2.3.3.5.

2.5.4   Schwa metathesis

There are three verb stems of the form CCəC, where the vowel and the second consonant of the onset (a liquid) undergo optional metathesis, when the /-i/ object index is added (see §7.3.2). This process is very similar to the schwa syncope with CəC verb stems described in §2.5.3.5. Schwa syncope is also phonotactically restricted in these examples, because it would result in a CCC cluster.

(2.58)

Examples of schwa metathesis	
underlying form	surface form
/tʃrəv-i/ 'push-OBJ'	[tʃərvi]
/pləv-i/ 'pull-OBJ'	[pəlvi]
/brətʃ-i/ 'stick-OBJ'	[ᵐbərtʃi]

2.5.5 /ax/ metathesis

Metathesis of the /ax/ sequence has been attested in the first-person singular personal pronoun /axna(w)/, which has been attested as both [xana(w)] and [axna(w)].

2.5.6 Reanalysis of nasal /n/ as prenasalisation

Some (mostly younger) speakers of Ahamb merge /nr/ sequences across morpheme boundaries into [ⁿᵈr]. This is true for noun stems, which start with /r/, when the accreted article /n-/ is added such as /n-ren/ 'man' (see §2.3.3.5), which these speakers pronounce as [ⁿᵈren] rather than [nren]. Another example is /n-ras/ 'sea', which is pronounced as [ⁿᵈras] (thus neutralising the distinction with /ɒas/ [ⁿᵈras] 'not be able to'). This process has also been attested across word boundaries: /xən roxbaj/ [xəⁿᵈroxᵐbaj] 'in.order.to in.future'

2.5.7 Vowel raising

There is a group of verbs and verb-like forms with /o/ in the stem, which take the suffixed object pro-index /-e/. When the object pro-index is added, the stem vowel is raised to /u/. Two examples are given in (2.59). A full list of these forms can be found in §§7.3.3, 9.2.5.2, 11.2.2.

(2.59)

Examples of /o, ø/ raising before object index /-e/		
stem	form without /-e/	form with /-e/
/rov/ 'close to'	[rof]	[ruve]
/tʃol/ 'peel'	[tʃol]	[tʃule]

2.6 Stress and intonation

2.6.1 Stress patterns

In Oceanic languages, stress is most commonly on the penultimate syllable (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 35). However, a great number of languages have exhibited other patterns (Lynch 2000). Billington et al. (2020: 2829-2830) provide a recent overview of the stress patterns found in the languages of Vanuatu for which there is sufficient description. Among the documented patterns are regular stress on the ultimate/penultimate/antepenultimate syllable, weight-sensitive systems and lexically contrastive stress. For some Vanuatu languages, prominence patterns suggest phrasal accent, rather than lexical stress.

Ahamb's closest relative for which an analysis of stress patterns exists is Uluveu (Healey 2013: 31-36). Healey's analysis suggests that in Uluveu stress follows an elaborate pattern which depends on syllable weight, which in turn is determined by the quality of the vowel of each syllable.

The following account of stress in Ahamb is based on auditory impressions of prominence in recordings of over 100 words in isolation for three speakers, as well as recordings of connected speech from the Ahamb corpus. None of these recordings was made as part of an experiment specifically designed to investigate stress in Ahamb, but their observation resulted in a few clear patterns, which are described below. There is no evidence that stress in Ahamb is lexically contrastive.

In Ahamb, primary stress is most commonly found on the ultimate syllable. A few examples are given in (2.60). This is true both for polysyllabic stems (2.60a), as well as for monosyllabic stems, which attract a prefix such as the accreted article /na-/ (see §3.3.2) (2.60b) or a prefixed subject index (2.60c).

(2.60)	Examples of words with primary stress on the ultimate syllable
a.	/liˈpus/ 'cat'
	/maˈxoʙ/ 'lizard'
	/lav.laˈvis/ 'play'
	/na.uˈtʃin/ 'language'
	/ma.uˈrin/ 'life'
	/xalˈwen/ 'neck'
	/maˈtu/ 'be strong'
b.	/naˈbut/ 'boat'
	/naˈvos/ 'paddle'
c.	/ŋaˈru/ '3SG-be.two'
	/ŋaˈryr/ '3SG-be.three'
	/naˈpus/ '1SG-ask'

In some words, however, stress falls on the penultimate syllable. The stressed vowel in such words is normally /a/ and the vowel in the following (ultimate) syllable is other than /a/. This necessity condition is represented in Figure 2-9. In (2.61a) there are examples of disyllabic words, which follow this pattern. The example in (2.61b) is a noun, featuring what appears to be the /na-/ accreted article.[25] It would be expected to have ultimate stress, as described above. However, in this particular case, the word always appears with /na-/, which suggests that the accreted article has been lexicalised. Two exceptions to the necessity condition are presented in (2.61c), where penultimate stress is attested even though the penultimate vowels are /o/ or /ø/.

The necessary condition in Figure 2-9 is not a sufficient condition. In other words, if a word has /a/ in the penultimate syllable and another vowel in the last syllable, this does not mean that stress has to fall on the penult. Examples of such words with stress on the ultimate syllable can be found in (2.60).

stress on penultimate syllable ⇒	penultimate syllable nucleus = /a/
	final syllable nucleus ≠ /a/
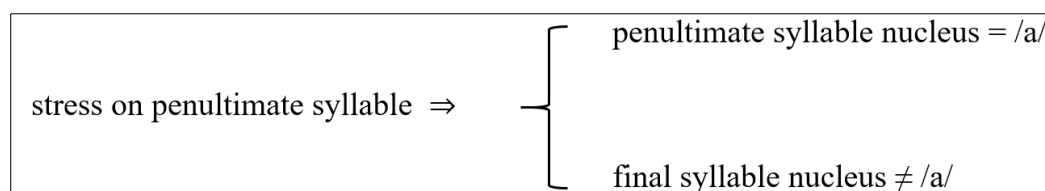
Figure 2-9. Necessary condition for penultimate stress

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[25] The reconstruction for PNCV and POc for 'bamboo' is *bue* (Ross, Pawley & Osmond 2008: 403; Clark 2009: 87), suggesting that the syllable in /ˈnaʙu/ is not part of the stem historically.

(2.61)	Examples of words with primary stress on penultimate syllable
a.	/ˈma.tʃɪ/ 'star'
	/ˈva.re/ 'outside'
	/ˈbxa.vən/ 'stomach'
	/ˈba.ŋim/ 'door'
	/ˈba.sən/ 'beard'
	/ˈma.ʁən/ 'chest'
	/ˈra.rəs/ 'tropical almond tree'
	/ˈba.rən/ 'head'
	/ˈva.rus/ 'paddle'
	/ˈsxa.ʁur/ 'squat'
	/ˈxa.ʁən/ 'k.o. unicornfish'
	/ˈsa.ʁin/ 'sin'
b.	/ˈna.ʁu/ 'bamboo'
c.	/maˈxo.bər/ 'shark'
	/naˈtlø.ʁəx/ 'k.o. unicornfish'

In reduplicated stems pronounced in isolation, prominence is normally not substantially higher on any of the syllables. Some examples are given in (2.62a). When included in phrases or in connected speech, stress tends to fall on the ultimate syllable in reduplicated words (2.62b). In partially reduplicated stems, stress also tends to fall on the ultimate syllable (2.62c).

(2.62)	Examples of stress in reduplicated stems
a.	/lytlyt/ 'be yellow'
	/lemlem/ 'be true'
	/mutmut/ 'be short'
	/pyⁿrpyⁿr/ 'be hot'
b.	/ˈnwoj pyⁿrˈpyⁿr/ 'hot water, tea'
c.	/kəˈkaj/ 'sing
	/nøˈnør/ 'be straight, be alright'

There are a number of disyllabic words where stress varies when they are produced in isolation, both among speakers and for a single speaker. Some examples are given in (2.63). Note that /malwen/ 'tongue' falls in this category whereas the almost identical word /xalwen/ 'neck' consistently has ultimate stress.

(2.63)	Examples of words in which primary stress varies between ultimate and penultimate syllable

/ˈnogxa/ or /nogˈxa/ 'now'
/ˈveve/ or /veˈve/ 'aunt'
/ˈniŋe/ or /niˈŋe/ 'nangai nut (Canarium indicum)'
/ˈrabuj/ or /raˈbuj/ 'bush nut (Barringtonia edulis)'
/ˈnaDjaw/ or /naˈDjaw/ 'coconut crab'
/ˈmalwen/ or /malˈwen/ 'tongue'
/ˈlabur/ or /laˈbur/ 'hole'
/ˈrokaj/ or /roˈkaj/ 'heliconia leaf'
/ˈmavDør/ or /mavˈDør/ 'egg'
/ˈmaru/ or /maˈru/ 'coconut, copra'
/ˈnive/ or /niˈve/ 'stingray'

Transitive verb stems that are monosyllabic, or disyllabic with stress on the final syllable, tend to keep their stress on the same syllable when a suffixed object pro-index (see §7.3) is attached. Some examples are given in (2.64a). In stems that undergo the optional schwa syncope (see §2.5.3.5), stress is attracted to the ultimate syllable (the object pro-index) (2.64b).

(2.64)	Examples of stress patterns in transitive verbs with an attached object index
a.	/ˈmDas-i/ 'ruin-OBJ'
	/ˈʙyns-i/ 'watch-OBJ'
	/ˈiʙ-i/ 'spread-OBJ'
	/ˈDəŋ-i/ 'search-OBJ'
	/ˈvŋan-i/ 'feed-OBJ'
	/ˈprag-ni/ 'do-OBJ'
	/pəˈsax-ni/ 'give-OBJ'
	/ˈgur-e/ 'cover-OBJ'
	/ˈkur-e/ 'make-OBJ'
b.	/rs-i/ or /ˈrəs-i/ 'see-OBJ'
	/ps-i/ or /ˈpəs-i/ 'tie-OBJ'

Longer words normally have a secondary stress two syllables to the left of the syllable carrying primary stress regardless of whether primary stress is on the ultimate or penultimate syllable. This is true regardless of whether it is a stem with more than two syllables (as in 2.65a), or the longer word is the result of compounding (as in 2.65b), /na-/ article accretion (as in 2.65c) or the addition of verbal prefixes (as in 2.65d).

(2.65)	Examples of words with secondary stress	
	example	comment
a.	/ˌlikoˈpit/ 'dolphin' /ˌlidumˈdum/ 'whale' /ˌlavlaˈvis/ 'play' /ˌvilaxˈlax/ 'yellow white-eye (Zosterops flavifrons)' /ˌʙutʙuˈtat/ 'be entangled'	
b.	/liˌʙurmaˈru/ 'copra tradesman' /xajˌtʃimaˈru/ 'tool for shelling out copra' /liˌvenʙəbˈxaw/ (mythological evil spirit's name')	prefix /li-/ + /ʙur/ 'buy' + /maru/ 'copra' /xaj/ 'tree' + /tʃi/ 'shell out' + /maru/ 'copra'
c.	/ˌnaviˈmer/ 'emerald dove' /ˌnaʙuˈtʃən/ 'tail' /ˌnaʙuˈsən/ 'saliva' /ˌnabesˈxaw/ 'reef' /ˌnaliˈbar/ 'swamp'	
d.	/nə-ˌsba-novˈkar-e/ 'I don't know it.' /ˌna-ro-ˈmen/ 'I am laughing.' /ˌna-ro-ˈprag-ni/ 'I am doing it' /ˌŋa-bəbˈleg/ '3SG-be.short'	1SG-NEG-know-OBJ 1SG-IPFV-laugh 1SG-IPFV-do-OBJ

2.6.2 Intonation

Intonation contributes to a range of nuances in meaning that are not carried by segments. Typologically, intonation is invariably used to denote the speaker's attitude and feelings (Ashby 2011: 179). This section lists some basic observations on the role that intonation can have in discourse organisation. Intonation is also discussed in connection with coordination of noun phrases (see §6.6), interrogative clauses (see §9.3) and condition-consequence clauses (see §13.2.3.3).

Simple declarative clauses in Ahamb are normally marked by a fall in intonation at the end of the clause. Figure 2-10 shows the F0 contour of a declarative sentence, where the gradually falling intonation at the end marks the end of the sentence. The sentence also starts with low intonation with three peaks marking the three intonational phrases.

nxaj	in	ŋa-maᵐburᵐbur	ŋa-ᵐbəlᵐbəl-ni	van	vi	pen
stick	DIST	3SG-be.broken	3SG-throw-OBJ	go	go.to	down

'That stick broke, he threw it down.' [504-8]
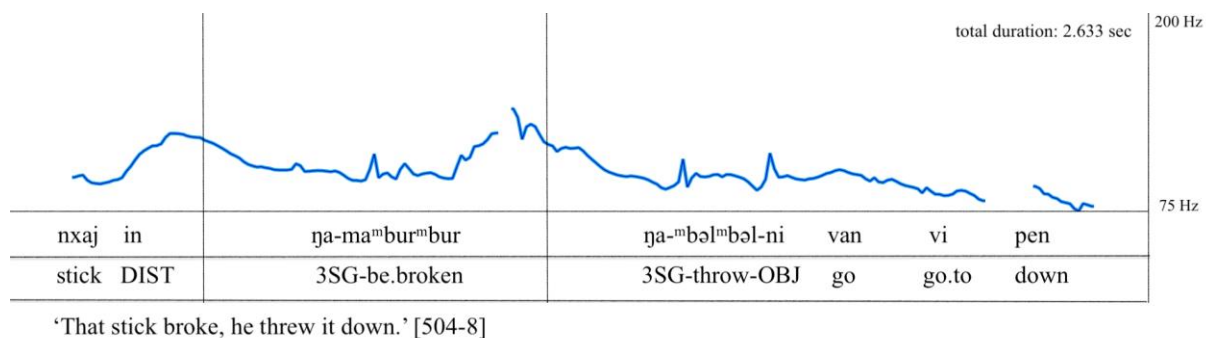
Figure 2-10. Pitch contour of a typical declarative sentence

The clause in Figure 2-10 is a complex sentence that is the result of asyndetic coordination (juxtaposition) of two simple clauses (see §13.4.1.1). A pause might be expected between the coordinands in asyndetic coordination but this is not the case here. In fact, the more prominent rise of intonation at the end of the first clause, at the word /ŋamaburbur/, besides marking the verb of that clause, likely also suggest that the phonological utterance has not ended.

Rising intonation at the end of a clause is also commonly used in storytelling in Ahamb, so that the addressee can expect a continuation of the discourse, even if a pause is made between the clauses, as in the example in Figure 2-11. Again, a rise in pitch marks each intonational phrase (two in each clause), but a much steeper rise in intonation at the end of each clause suggests that more of the story is coming.

ŋa-suᵐʙ	rox	løn	nteva	s-en	[pause]	ta-sar	nil	vis-en
3SG-sit	be.located	LOCP	table	POSS.GNR-3SG		3PL-carry	nail	to-3SG

'He sits down at his table, they bring him nails.' [502-155]
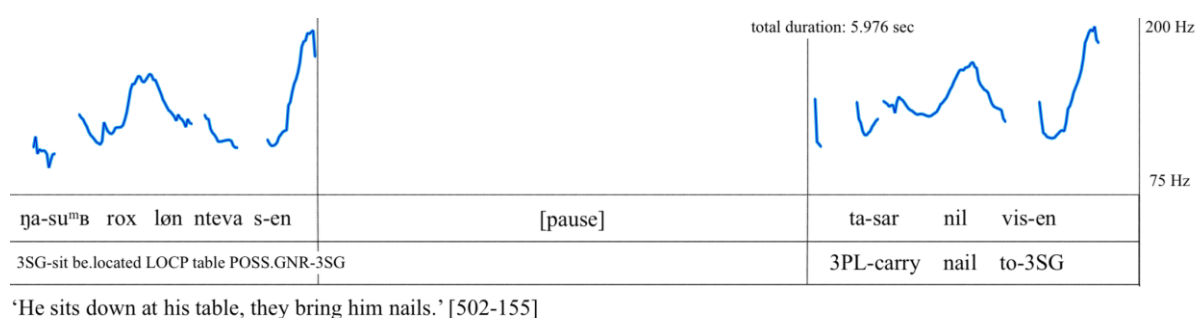
Figure 2-11. Pitch contour of two adjacent clauses demonstrating rising intonation at the end of each clause suggesting that a continuation of the discourse follows

The sentence demonstrated in Figure 2-12 is the continuation of the discourse presented in Figure 2-11 above. In this example, the entire phonological utterance ends in a rise in

intonation to mark that the next clause continues the story. The relative clause in the middle of the sentence also ends with a rise in intonation, which together with the following short pause marks the boundary between the relative clause and the main clause. This example also demonstrates a significant rise in intonation on the first phonological phrase to mark its fronting.

nil aven	Data-ro-votʃ	likalim løn ŋel-xa	ta-sar-e vis-en
nail REL	1PL.EXCL-IPFV-nail house	LOCP NSG-PROX	3PL-carry-OBJ to-3SG

'The [type of] nails that we use for making houses, they bring those to him.' [502-157]
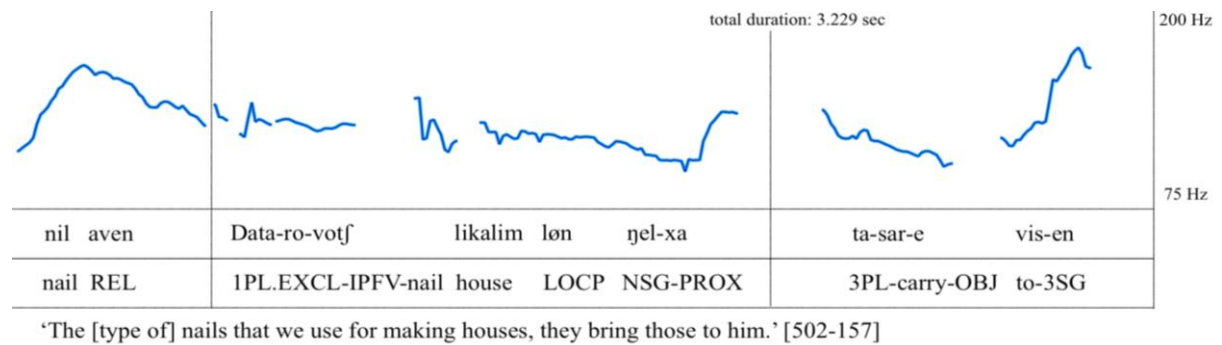
Figure 2-12. Pitch contour of a sentence involving a relative clause and fronting

A rise, commonly with an immediate subsequent fall of intonation at the end of a clause, is also associated with polar interrogatives (see §9.3.1).

2.7   Orthography

The orthography used in this work is presented in (2.66). This orthography was developed in close co-operation with the Ahamb community. The Ahamb Language Committee (see §1.5.1.1) and the community teachers were consulted throughout the project. Two large community meetings were held in the church specifically to discuss orthographic choices. The guiding principles in developing the orthography were:

- creating a phonemic orthography;
- adhering to the community's preferences;
- incorporating traditions established by existing orthographies for other Malekula languages;
- considering suitability for use in electronic contexts and convenience for typing on electronic devices (e.g. giving preference to digraphs rather than diacritics as much as possible).

(2.66) The orthography used in the current work

	phoneme	grapheme	example
consonants	/m/	\<m\>	*mam* 'be ripe'
	/n/	\<n\>	*nov* 'tink'
	/ŋ/	\<ng\>	*ngos* 'be lazy'
	/p/	\<p\>	*por* 'break'
	/t/	\<t\>	*tata* 'father'
	/k/	\<k\>	*kor* 'make'
	/b/	\<b\>	*brav* 'breadfruit'
	/d/	\<d\>	*dasdas* 'be smooth'
	/g/	\<g\>	*gmay* 'come'
	/v/	\<v\>	*van* 'go'
	/s/	\<s\>	*sar* 'carry'
	/x/	\<h\>	*huh* 'crab'
	/tʃ/	\<j\>	*jav* 'cut'
	/ᴘ/	\<pp\>	*ppus* 'coconut milk'
	/r/	\<r\>	*rav* 'take'
	/ʙ/	\<bb\>	*bbus* 'squeeze'
	/ᴅ/	\<dr\>	*dren* 'blood'
	/l/	\<l\>	*leb* 'be big'
	/j/	\<y\>	*yov* 'dive'
	/w/	\<w\>	*woy* 'water'
vowels	/i/	\<i\>	*is* 'yell'
	/e/	\<e\>	*sev* 'dance'
	/a/	\<a\>	*ato* 'they (3PL)'
	/o/	\<o\>	*bong* 'day'
	/u/	\<u\>	*ur* 'place'
	/ə/	\<ë\>	*hër* 'dig'
	/ø/	\<ö\>	*lön* 'on'
	/y/	\<ü\>	*mün* 'drink'

A few orthographic choices need further elaboration:

- Prenasalisation in /b, d, g, ʙ, ᴅ/ is not orthographically represented. This was in line with the community's preferences (see §2.2.2).

- \<j\> was chosen to represent /tʃ/ at the community's wish. It is also in line with orthographies established for other Malekula languages, e.g. Nese (Crowley 2006c: 4), Lamap (Williams 2019: 46), Unua (Pearce 2015: 10) and Uripiv (Moore 2019: 52).

- <bb> was chosen to represent /ʙ/, which is an established tradition in other Malekula languages, e.g. Avava (Crowley 2006a: 37), Neverver (Barbour 2012: 71), Unua (Pearce 2015: 10), Lamap (Williams 2019: 46) and Uripiv (Moore 2019: 52).

- By analogy, <pp> was chosen to represent /P/.

- <dr> was chosen to represent /D/ at the community's wish. This is in line with previous spelling traditions for Ahamb. More specifically, the annual school sports games that see competitions between schoolchildren from many communities in Southeast Malekula are called (and spelled) *Drato Games* (*drato* is the first person plural inclusive personal pronoun, which reportedly has a similar form in most languages spoken in Southeast Malekula). The <dr> spelling in the name of the games was an established tradition for at least a few years before the Ahamb Language Documentation Project was initiated. Other Vanuatu languages with longer established orthographies also use <dr> for a prenasalised coronal trill, e.g. Avava (Crowley 2006a: 37) and Neverver (Barbour 2012: 71).[26]

- <ng> was chosen to represent /ŋ/ in line with widespread conventions in Oceanic and other languages.

- <h> was chosen for /x/ because of the community's preferences. A strong argument for this choice was the convention of spelling the island's name as <Ahamb>. Community members demonstrated resistance to using <x> or <kh> for this sound, as the convention has been in previous linguistic work on Ahamb (Tryon 1976; Charpentier 1982). The velar fricative has been represented by various graphemes in more established orthographies of Malekula languages, e.g. as <x> in Unua (Pearce 2015: 10) and Lamap (Williams 2019: 46), as <h> in V'ënen Taut (Fox 1979: 21)[27] and Ahamb's neighbour Uluveu (Healey 2013: 38), and as <kh> in Nese (Crowley 2006c: 4, 49), Neve'ei (Musgrave 2007: 28),[28] Tape (Crowley 2006d: 10),[29] Naman (Crowley 2006b: 54) and Neverver (Barbour 2012: 71).

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[26] However, speakers of Lamap, another Malekula language, preferred to write /D/ as <dd>, by analogy with <bb> for /ʙ/ (Williams 2019: 46).

[27] In subsequent work on V'ënen Taut, <kh> has been used for the velar fricative (Dodd 2014: 31-32).

[28] In these two languages, the velar fricative contrasts with the voiceless glottal fricative, which is spelled <h>.

[29] Crowley (2006d: 10) specifically comments on the choice of <kh> rather than <h> to represent the velar fricative in Tape, where the velar fricative does not contrast with a glottal fricative. This choice reflects a personal choice as well as consistency with other neighbouring languages, for which <kh> is used. Given this, Crowley still acknowledges the disadvantage of using a digraph.

- <ë> was chosen for /ə/ in line with a convention adopted for other Malekula languages, e.g. Naman (Crowley 2006b: 55) and Tape (Crowley 2006d: 10). Both McKerras (2001) and Moore (2019: 52) choose to use <ö> for /ə/. This alternative was not an option for Ahamb, because the grapheme <ö> is used for the front central rounded vowel. Healey (2013) introduces the grapheme <ə> for /ə/ in the Uluveu language, but this choice was deemed impractical by the Ahamb community. It was also considered that a grapheme with diacritic, such as <ë>, would be more easily accessible on electronic devices, than the IPA symbol <ə>.
- <ö> and <ü> were chosen by analogy with <ë> and for the sake of practicality when typing on electronic devices.

Apart from the graphemes listed above, <f> is used in borrowings such as *famili* 'family' or toponyms such as *Farun.*

CHAPTER 3.   NOMINAL CLASSES

3.1   Introduction

This chapter describes Ahamb's nominal classes and the attested compounding strategies. It is divided into five main sections. The first four deal with each of the four types of nominals that are attested in Ahamb: pronouns, common nouns, personal nouns and local nouns. Each of these sections discusses the semantic and morphosyntactic criteria for the existence of the relevant type of nominals and any attested subtypes. The last section discusses compounding.

This is the first of four chapters dealing with nominals. Chapters 4-6 discuss various noun modifiers and the structure of the noun phrase. Because of the relative complexity of possessive constructions in Ahamb, they are discussed in a separate chapter, Chapter 5, which also discusses the related phenomenon of alienability, which is a criterion for classification of Ahamb's nouns.

3.2   Pronouns

In Ahamb, there is a set of independent personal pronouns. They have corresponding sets of possessive pronouns, possessive determiners and subject indexes. This section lists independent personal pronouns and describes their properties. Two indefinite pronouns are also discussed.

3.2.1   Personal pronouns

Independent personal pronouns in Ahamb contrast between first, second and third person, as well as singular, dual and plural number. Furthermore, there is a clusivity distinction for the first person non-singular. This paradigm is typical for Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 35).

3.2.1.1   The basic independent pronouns
The basic independent personal pronoun paradigm is given in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1. Independent personal pronouns

	SG		DU	PL
1	*ahna(w)/hana(w)*	INCL	*draru*	*drato*
		EXCL	*maru*	*mato*
2	*hayug*		*mru*	*mto*
3	*ange/angay*		*aru*	*ato*

The first-person singular form has four allomorphs involving metathesis (see §2.5.5) and/or a deletion of the final labiovelar approximant. These forms appear in free variation. The third person singular form *angay* appears to be archaic. The dual and plural forms can be analysed as a combination of an initial element, which marks the person (*dra-, ma-, m-, a-*) and a second element marking number: *-ru* for dual and *-to* for plural. The latter two forms are reflexes of POc **rua* 'two' and **tolu* 'three' respectively, and their cliticised reflexes commonly appear with this function in Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 69).

The examples in (3.1) demonstrate independent personal pronouns functioning as grammatical subjects (of an intransitive verb in 3.1a-b and of a transitive verb as in 3.1c) and objects (of a verb in 3.1d and of a preposition in 3.1e). They can also be used to express the possessor in a possessive construction (see §5.2.2).

(3.1) a. ***Mato***   *mata-van.*
          1PL.EXCL   1PL.EXCL-go
          'We go.' [89-34]

      b. ***Hana*** *na-porah*   *lön*   *1948.*
          1SG   1SG-be.born   LOCP   1948
          'I was born in 1948.' [85-5]

      c. ***Mato***   *mata-prag*   *gasin.*
          1PL.EXCL   1PL.EXCL-do   work
          'We will do the work' [27-44]

      d. *Ka-r-kaykay*   ***hanaw***!
          2SG-SBQT-call   1SG
          'You call me!' [66-12]

e. *Nga-uj   vis-en   **hanaw.***
   3SG-say   to-CNSTR   1SG
   'He talked to me.' [92-104]

Independent personal pronouns are also used in the object position to express reflexivity, as in (3.2) (see also §9.5):

(3.2) *Nga-ppël   **ange**   nga-r-vi   nren.*
       3SG-turn   3SG   3SG-SBQT-become   man
       'He turned himself into a human.' [232-10]

Dual pronouns (as well as their possessive counterparts and subject indexes) can be used honorifically to refer to a single person who is in a taboo relationship with the speaker (see §1.3.1). In these cases, the dual is a marker of the taboo relationship. This type of honorific use of dual has been attested in other languages of Vanuatu and the Pacific, e.g. in Daakie (Krifka 2017). An Ahamb example can be found in (4.29b) in §4.6.2.

3.2.1.2   *Other forms related to personal pronouns*

There are two complex forms for third-person dual and plural, which function as personal pronouns – *(a)lëngel* and *(a)tëngel* respectively. These forms appear with or without the initial /a/.[30] Both forms can be analysed as mergers of the third-person pronouns *aru* and *ato* + *ngel,* which marks non-singular number (see §4.4). The r~l variation in *(a)lëngel* likely reflects a historical change of /l/ to /r/. The historical development also involved centralisation of /u, o/ as stress moved to the last syllable of the compounds. Both *(a)lëngel* and *(a)tëngel* can appear on their own (3.3a) or together with their respective basic personal pronouns to form the complex pronouns *(a)lëngel aru* and *(a)tëngel ato* (3.3b).

(3.3) a. ***Lëngel***   *ara-roh.*
          3DU   3DU-stay
          'The two of them stayed.' [25-84]

       b. ***Tëngel   ato***   *ta-varah.*
          3PL   3PL   3PL-follow
          'They followed.' [30-133]

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[30] /a/ is most likely the personaliser *a* which normally marks personal nouns (§3.4.2)

Two other forms, *laharu* and *lahato* can be used as vocative forms when addressing a group of people in order to attract their attention, similar to English *folks* or Bislama *olgeta*. The two forms are interchangeable – even if their form suggests the dual~plural distinction conveyed by *-ru* and *-to* in other pronouns, any such distinction appears to have levelled out, assuming that it existed historically. *Laharu* appears to be more common than *lahato*.

(3.4) **Laharu**,   *mta-van*   *vi*   *ras!*
      folks   2PL-go   go.to   sea
      'Folks, go down to the sea!' [232-13]

3.2.2   The indefinite pronouns *aven, drës*

The word *aven* can mean 'one (person from a group)', a meaning related to its indefinite function (see §4.7). In this sense, *aven* can function as an indefinite pronoun on its own.

(3.5) **Aven**   *nga-kar…*
      one   3SG-say
      'One person said…' [39-40]

Drës, which more commonly appears as a quantifier (see §4.8), can serve the same function with a plural meaning, namely 'some (people)'. In these cases, it virtually always appears in its non-singular complex form with the non-singular marker *ngel*.

(3.6) *Rohbay*   **ngel drës**   *ta-rëng*   *drato.*
      in.future   NSG-INDF   3PL-leave   1PL.INCL
      'Some [people] will leave us.' [104-36]

3.3   Common nouns

This section discusses the class of common nouns. The subclasses of alienable/inalienable and alimentary/general common nouns are discussed in Chapter 5.

3.3.1   Semantic and morphosyntactic definition

Common nouns comprise the largest open class of nouns in Ahamb and include nouns that are not personal (see §3.4) or local (see §3.5). The most obvious formal distinction between common nouns and personal/local nouns is that they can feature the accreted article *n(V)-*. The accreted article is optional and is thus not a perfect diagnostic for classification. Other

distinguishing features of common nouns are that they tend to occur after a preposition like *lön* 'in, at' to form a locative or temporal phrase and they cannot be preceded by the personal noun marker *a* or the local noun markers *a* and *man*.[31]

In Oceanic languages, common nouns are often further divided into human (human nouns that are not in the personal category and some non-human animates, such as pets) and non-human nouns (all other nouns) (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 69). In Ahamb, human common nouns do not exhibit specific morphosyntactic behaviour, although there is a group of human common nouns which are derived from personal nouns with the prefix *ke-* (see §3.3.3.2).

3.3.2   *n(V)-* accretion

Many languages in the North and Central Vanuatu (NCV) group have retained reflexes of the Proto-Oceanic article **na* as proclitics or prefixes that do not function as articles and have been referred to as noun markers (Crowley 1985; Lynch 2001; 2017). In many NCV languages, this prefix takes the form of *n-* or *nV-*. Some Malekula languages in which this type of initial accretion to nouns has been reported are Uluveu (Healey 2013: 55-56), Lamap (Williams 2019: 52), Unua (Pearce 2007: 49; 2015), Neverver (Barbour 2012: 77), Tape (Crowley 2006d: 119), Neve'ei (Musgrave 2007: 32), Naman (Crowley 2006b: 45), Nahavaq (Dimock 2009: 62) and Ninde (Murray 2018: 40). This phenomenon has been referred to as *article accretion*, **na-accretion* or *n(V)-accretion*, among other terms, referring to either the historical function/form or the synchronic form of the prefix. In Ahamb, *n(V)*-accretion is optional in the sense that most common nouns can occur with or without the prefix. This optionality has also been attested in some of the languages listed above. The following two subsections describe the form of *n(V)*-accretion in Ahamb and its optionality.

In the examples in the remainder of this work, the boundary between the accreted article and the noun stem is not normally specified (and accretion specifically glossed), unless it is relevant to the discussion.

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[31] Common nouns can be modified by local noun phrases to refer to locative/temporal entities, see §3.5.4.

3.3.2.1 *Form of* **n(V)***-accretion*

The reflex of the POc article **na* in Ahamb can appear in the two basic forms *n-* or *na-*. Whereas *na-* is quite clearly and invariably pronounced as [na], the pronunciation of *n-* varies somewhat. It can be: (1) a simple [n] preceding the rest of the word, which is integrated into the onset of the first syllable; (2) in slow and careful speech /n/ can be followed by a short schwa sound; or (3) a somewhat longer and syllabic /n/. For example, the word *n-ren* 'man' can be heard as [nren], [nə̆.ren] or [n̩.ren] (see §2.3.3.5). When *n-* is accreted to a noun stem that starts with two consonants (only attested in two interrogative lexemes), it is syllabic: *n-sveri* [n̩ˈsveri] 'what', *n-svay* [n̩ˈsvaj] 'what'. Finally, stems that start with the prenasalised sounds /ᴅ/ and /g/ begin with a nasal component and it is unclear whether *n-* may be preceding them, since no lengthening of the nasal component has been observed (see §2.5.3.3). See also §2.5.6 for cases where /nr/ sequences involving accreted *n-*, are reanalysed as /ᴅ/.

In the corpus, *na-* occurs more than two times more frequently than *n-*. There are phonological, morphological and lexical factors that determine whether *n(V)*-accretion takes the form *n-* or *na-*. The general phonological rule is that *n-* appears before #C*a* stems, whereas *na-* is preferred in all other cases:

(3.7)

| POc **na* > *n-* /_C*a* |

Some examples of nouns, which follow the above rule, are listed in (3.8). In (3.8a) are stems starting with a number of different consonants, followed by *a,* and which take *n-*accretion. In (3.8b-d) are examples of stems which do not satisfy the above constraint and therefore take *na-*accretion. Among these examples are:

- #CV stems where V ≠ *a* (3.8b);
- #V stems (3.8c);
- #CCV stems (even if V = *a*) (3.8d).

(3.8)	Examples of Ahamb nouns with *n*-accretion and *na*-accretion

a. *n-barme* 'island cabbage'
    n-habb 'fire(wood)'
    n-hasu 'rat'
    n-hay 'wood'
    n-jargor 'room'
    n-man 'bird'
    n-maru 'coconut'
    n-ran 'ground'
    n-rang 'wind; fly'
    n-vare 'country'

b. *na-bismur* 'orange (fruit)'
    na-but 'boat'
    na-gur 'dry coconut'
    na-her 'octopus'
    na-jigaur 'hibiscus'
    na-lön 'thought'
    na-mer 'snake'
    na-mir 'light, gospel'
    na-për 'diarrhea'
    na-pon 'top'
    na-süs 'breast'
    na-ven 'fruit'
    na-vos 'paddle (for a canoe)'
    na-vüj 'banana'

c. *na-im* 'home, village'
    na-ur 'place'

d. *na-grav* 'clam shell'
    na-jrun 'new shoot (of a plant)'
    na-mren 'eye'
    na-mriar 'sun'
    na-pnevër 'woman'
    na-rmaj 'evil spirit'
    na-vngor 'k.o. banana'

The rule in (3.7) has its exceptions, some of which are systematic. The following lexical and morphological factors take precedence over the phonological rule in (3.7).

- Nouns derived with the prefixes *li-, ke-, vi-*, as well as nominalisations with the suffix *-in* (see § 3.3.3) take *na*-accretion, even if the stem starts with C*a*, e.g. *na-palong-in* 'love' < *palong* 'love, want, feel'. Only two exceptions to this rule have been found:

n-kanin 'food' (likely because it is a very frequently used word that is no longer analysed as a nominalisation of *kan* 'eat') and *n-pasüs-in* 'ancestry' from *pasüs* 'give birth' (contrasting with *na-pasüs-in* 'birth').

- Borrowed nouns tend to appear with *n-* independently of the stem onset, even when this seemingly produces otherwise phonotactically unacceptable consonant clusters of three consonants in the syllable onset.[32] Some examples are listed in (3.9a). Two exceptions to this observation are listed in (3.9b).[33]

(3.9)	Some common nouns borrowed into Ahamb from Bislama and English and the form of *nV*-accretion associated with them.	
a.	*n-baket*	'bucket'
	n-bret	'bread'
	n-jalenj	'challenge'
	n-kapa	'tin roof'
	n-kek	'cake'
	n-lanj	'ship'
	n-melen	'watermelon'
	n-oil	'oil'
	n-pep	'paper, book'
	n-plan	'plan'
	n-plastik	'plastic bottle'
	n-rum	'room'
	n-sesën	'session'
	n-skul	'school'
	n-topik	'topic'
	n-tuluk	'tuluk (a type of laplap)'
	n-wik	'week'
	n-yut	'youth'
b.	*na-kumal*	'sweet potato'
	na-os	'horse'

There are also a few unsystematic exceptions to the rule set described above:

- The interrogative nouns *n-sveri* 'what' and *n-svay* 'which' take *n-* even though they are of Oceanic origin and their stems start with two consonants.

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[32] As discussed in §2.3.3.5, in these cases *n-* is normally syllabic.

[33] These two examples conform to the general rule in (3.7). Since they denote items that are part of everyday life and commonly used, it is likely that they are no longer viewed as borrowings by Ahamb speakers.

- Two commonly used words whose stems begin with *wo-* also take *n*-accretion: *n-wog* 'canoe', *n-woy* 'water'. Historically, these forms derived from **wa-* stems, namely **waga* and **waiR* respectively, suggesting that the change of **a > o* is more recent than accretion (John Lynch, pers. comm.).

- Three commonly used nouns whose stems begin with C*e-*, also take *n*-accretion: *n-ren* 'man', *n-sel* 'knife', *n-ben* 'body'. The latter contrasts with *na-ben* 'mat'.

- Furthermore, the word for 'song' has been attested as both *n-be* (more common among older speaker) and *na-be* (more common among younger speakers).

- *Na-gaw* 'spider, spider web' takes *na-* even though it satisfies the rule in (3.7).

There is also a small set of common nouns, which start with *ni-*. These forms are invariant, meaning that they do not occur without *ni-*. The data set in (3.10) contains a list of these nouns. The reconstructions presented in (3.10) suggest that there is historical evidence that these words include a reflex of an earlier article, rather than /n/ being part of the stem. Other Malekula languages have *ni-* as a reflex of the POc article, e.g. Nahavaq (Dimock 2009), Neverver (Barbour 2012) and Neve'ei (Musgrave 2007). However, in Ahamb *ni-* appears to have fused with the stem and cannot be synchronically analysed as a separate morpheme.

(3.10) Ahamb common nouns, with initial *ni-*. The PNCV
        reconstructions are from Clark (2009)

nivu < PNCV **ʔavua*	'turtle'
nive < PNCV **vaɣi*	'stingray'
niav < PNCV **avu*	'dust'
niah	'k.o. vine'
nias	'Tahititian chestnut, Inocarpus fagifer'
niar	'sun; thatch, sago palm'
niahmat	'k.o. yam'
nihoj	'heap, pile'

Another common noun, *nam* 'mosquito' appears invariantly in this form. The /n/ in *nam* is historically part of the stem rather than a reflex of the historical article as suggested by its PNCV reconstruction **namu-ki* (Clark 2009: 156) and cognates in other Malekula languages where the word can take accretion of an *nV-* form: Unua *no-nom* (Pearce 2015: 51) and Lamap *na-nam* (Williams 2019: 31). It can be hypothesised that *nam* takes *n*-accretion in Ahamb, which becomes opaque in the surface form because of degemination of the resulting /nn/ sequence.

3.3.2.2 *Optionality of n(V)-accretion*

Ahamb common nouns do not always appear with the accreted article and often appear as bare stems. The presence and absence of *n(V)-* are generally in free variation for the majority of common nouns. This optionality principle holds for most common nouns, however, some nouns appear to never take accretion while others appear to always take accretion. The following conditions have been observed to predict whether accretion is present or not:

- Kin terms derived with *ke-* (see §3.3.3.2) always appear with accretion.
- Nouns derived with the prefix *vi-* (see §3.3.3.4) always appear with accretion.
- Monosyllabic roots and CCV- roots appear consistently with accretion in the corpus, e.g. *na-ṯlöbbëh* 'k.o. unicornfish'.
- Most nouns derived with the suffix *-in* (see §3.3.31), including some of the most frequently used words in the language, tend to appear with accretion.
- In compound nouns, accretion is sometimes absent in the second noun. This observation has been reported for other Malekula languages, e.g. Unua (Pearce 2015), but this is not always the case (see §3.6.1).
- Nouns derived with the prefix *mali-* (see §3.3.3.5) never take accretion.
- Some common nouns appear to never feature accretion, e.g. *mavdrör* 'egg'.

The presence or absence of accretion can in some cases function as a noun classifier. Namely, some nouns can function as either local or common nouns, for example *(n)ras* 'sea', *(na)lihayhay* 'jungle', *(na)limarog* 'night', *(na)likalim* 'house, home', *(na)bong* 'day, time'. When such nouns behave as common nouns, they can feature an accreted article but when they function as local nouns, they cannot. In (3.11a-b) the words *(n)ras* and *(na)limarog* denote the sea and the night as physical objects, while in examples (3.11c-d) they refer to the respective location/temporal setting. In examples (3.11d-e), *limarog* 'night' and *lihayhay* 'jungle' form locative phrases on their own, which is a feature of local nouns (see §3.5). In examples (3.11f-g) the common nouns *nalihayhay* 'jungle' and *nalimarog* 'night' form locative/temporal phrases with the help of the locative preposition *lön,* which typically precedes common nouns. As mentioned above, this diagnostic of local and common noun subclass membership is not conclusive, since article accretion is generally optional in Ahamb.

(3.11) a. *N-ras   nga-ppusppus.*
       ACCR-sea   3SG-foam
       'The sea foams.' [36-26]

b. *Na-limarog   nga-van   nog.*
   ACCR-night   3SG-go   already
   'The night is over.' [28-9]

c. *van   vi   ras*
   go   go.to   sea
   'go to the sea/shore' [44-62]

d. *Nga-mas-mrah   limarog   ne.*
   3SG-NEC-fly   night   LIM
   'It must fly only at night.' [106-79]

e. *Nga-paj   lihayhay.*
   3SG-sleep   jungle
   'He slept in the jungle.' [115-46]

f. *Ta-rohroh   lön   na-lihayhay.*
   3PL-live   LOCP   ACCR-jungle
   'They live in the jungle.' [65-5]

g. *...mete-r-va-ngavngav   lön   na-limarog.*
   1PL.EXCL.SEC-SBQT-GO-breathe   LOCP   ACCR-night
   '…then we will go sleep (lit. breathe repeatedly) during the night.' [18-140]

3.3.3   Nominalisation strategies

In Ahamb there are various ways to derive a common noun from verbs or other nouns. It is rare for the same stem to function as both a verb and a noun although there are a few such examples:

(3.12)	Stems that can function as both nouns and verbs	
	as noun	as verb
	(na)us 'rain'	*us* 'to rain'
	(na)dru 'earthquake'	*dru* 'to shake'
	(na)lölpang 'anger'	*lölpang* 'to be angry'
	(n)haj 'fruit, edible part of a plant'	*haj* 'to eat, bite'

Noun derivation strategies involve a number of prefixes or the suffix *-in*, which can co-occur with some of the prefixes. The suffix *-in* can also derive nouns on its own and this is the most

common nominalisation strategy in Ahamb. The following subsections describe Ahamb's common noun derivation strategies. Personal noun derivation is discussed in §3.4.4.

3.3.3.1 *Nominalisation with the suffix* **-in**

The suffix *-in* is the most productive strategy to derive a common noun from a verb. A noun derivation strategy involving a suffix with a similar form is common in other Malekula languages (see Barbour et al. 2019, for an overview). The nouns derived in this way can take *n(V)*-accretion, normally in the form of *na-* as demonstrated in the examples in (3.13a). A few nouns take *n-* accretion (3.13b, see also §3.3.2.1). The examples in (3.13) demonstrate that such nominalisations can be produced from both transitive and intransitive (active and stative) verbs. The examples also show that such nominalisations can denote concrete and abstract entities. For example, *kanin < kan* 'to eat' can mean both 'food' and 'eating'. This noun derivation strategy is still productive today and can form nouns from borrowed verbs as demonstrated in (3.13c).

(3.13)	Examples of deverbal nominalisations derived with the suffix *-in*	
	nominalisation	verb
a.	*(na)sëlvar-in* 'story'	*sëlvar* 'tell a story'
	(na)uj-in 'talk; language'	*uj* 'talk'
	(na)nov-in 'thought'	*nov* 'think'
	(na)prag-in 'work, making'	*prag* 'make, work'
	(na)gurgur-in 'plan, preparation'	*gurgur* 'plan, prepare'
	(na)lötu-in 'worship'	*lötu* 'worship'
	(na)van-in 'walk'	*van* 'go, walk'
	(na)vuy-in 'goodness'	*vuy* 'be good'
	(na)yov-in 'diving'	*yov* 'dive'
	(na)panün-in 'cooking'	*panün* 'cook'
b.	*(n)maur-in* 'life'	*maur* 'be alive'
	(n)kan-in 'food, eating'	*kan* 'eat'
	(n)pasüs-in 'ancestry'	*pasüs* 'give birth'
	(n)rah-in 'marriage'	*rah* 'get married'
	(n)matmatu-in 'power'	*matmatu* 'be strong'
c.	*(na)spel-in* 'rest'	*spel* 'rest' (Bisl.)
	(na)kuk-in 'cooking'	*kuk* 'cook' (Bisl.)

The suffix *-in* is also used in conjunction with the noun derivation prefixes *ke-* and *vi-*.

3.3.3.2 Common nouns derived with the prefix ke-

In Ahamb, there is a discrete class of human common nouns derived from kin terms in the personal noun category with the help of the prefix *ke-*. They take compulsory *na*-accretion. A list of these nouns is given in (3.14). The roots are normally directly possessed nouns as in (3.14a), with two exceptions listed in (3.14b) (see §5.2.1 for a list of directly possessed kin terms and §5.2.5 for indirectly possessed kin terms). The derivations from directly possessed roots include the *-(V)n* construct suffix, which attaches to directly possessed nouns, as well as the nominalising *-in* suffix (optional in some cases). Syncope is attested in a small number of examples. Semantically there appears to be no difference between the personal nouns and their derived counterparts. Both types of forms are commonly attested in the corpus.

(3.14) Human common nouns (kin terms) derived from personal noun kin terms using the prefix *ke-*

	personal noun	derived common noun	gloss/comment
a.	*arm-en*	*na-ke-rm-en-in*	'father'
	n-en	*na-ke-n-en-in*	'mother'
	man-ën	*na-ke-man-ën-in*	'brother'
	pen-ën	*na-ke-p(e)n-ën-in*	'sister' (optional syncope in stem)
	mhaybb-ën	*na-ke-mhaybb-ën-in*	'grandchild'
	ras-ën	*na-ke-ras-ën(-in)*	'younger sibling'
	nar-ën	*na-ke-nar-ën(-in)*	'child'
		na-ke-nar-n-in	(syncope in *nakenar<u>n</u>in*)
	hayv-en	*na-ke-hayv-en(-in)*	'brother, brother-in-law'
	marw-en	*na-ke-marw-en-in*	'uncle (brother of one's mother)'
	lwo-n	*na-ke-lwo-n-in*	'nephew'
b.	*veve*	*na-ke-veve-in*	'auntie'
	tavin	*na-ke-tavin-in*	'brother-in-law'

3.3.3.3 Common nouns derived with the prefix li-

A number of common nouns referring to fauna or locations start with *li-*. A list of fauna and flora terms starting with *li-* is given in (3.15). In the nouns in (3.15a) there is either synchronic or diachronic evidence for *li-* being part of a derivational process. No such evidence has been found for the examples in (3.15b). On the other hand, for the example in (3.15c) there is diachronic evidence against *li-* being a prefix in this case. These nouns can optionally take *na*-accretion.

(3.15)	Nouns formed with *li-* (flora and fauna)	
	noun	gloss, comment, PNCV reconstructions (Clark 2009))
a.	*(na-)li-pus*	'cat' < Bisl. *puskat*
	(na-)li-kopit	'dolphin' < POc *ku(r,R)iap* (Ross, Pawley & Osmond 2011)
	(na-)li-bulah	'banded rail (bird)' < PNCV *bilake*
	(na-)li-mer tobbtobb	'snapper (fish)' (< PNCV *mwala-keza* 'parrotfish')
	navimer li-bbëj-blav	'long-tail emerald dove' < *navimer* 'common emerald dove'; *bbëj* 'tail'; *blav* 'long'
b.	*(na-)li-pah*	'dog'
	(na-)li-ngil maram	'type of banana'
	(na-)li-mu	'Pacific reef heron'
c.	*(na-)lidumdum*	'whale' < PNCV *leidumudumu*

Common nouns denoting locations and formed with the prefix *li-* are listed in (3.16). All these nouns can take *na-*accretion, which is optional. The meaning of most of these nouns is 'a place of X', where X denotes the stem of the noun from which the *li-* noun was derived. In the examples in (3.16b), reduplication contributes a meaning of plurality (see §7.8.2).[34] The example in (3.16c) suggests that this derivational strategy may still be productive since *kakao* 'cocoa' is a relatively new term in Ahamb. The example in (3.16d) shows a noun which refers to a temporal setting rather than a location.[35] The nouns in (3.16e) also refer to locations or temporal settings and appear to feature the prefix *li-*, but their etymology is unclear. Finally, the three nouns in (3.16f) were most likely derived with *li-* but underwent subsequent phonological change. Note that *liur* 'garden' and *lur* 'small island' appear to be doublets, but may ultimately have different origins, deriving from PNCV *ʔuta* 'inland, bush, garden, place, time' and *ure* 'island' respectively (Clark 2009). The origin of *li-* is likely related to the POc locative base *lalo* with its shorter variants *la* and *lo* (Pawley 1972: 33, 114; Ross, Pawley & Osmond 2003: 245-247, 288-289; Barbour et al. 2019).

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[34] Reduplication of nominal roots is rare in Ahamb.

[35] In Ahamb locations and temporal settings are normally expressed through the same class of nouns, called here local nouns, which means that the language tends to treat locations and temporal settings in a similar way (§3.5).

(3.16) Common nouns denoting locations formed with prefix *li-*

	noun	gloss, comment, PNCV reconstruction (Clark 2009)
a.	*(na-)li-bar*	'swamp' < *bar* 'mud'
	(na-)li-bëgan	'beach' < *bëgan* 'sand'
	(na-)li-bbiag	'taro garden' < *bbiag* 'taro'
	(na-)li-bbugaw	'fence' < *na-bbugaw* 'fence' (common noun) < *bbu* 'bamboo' + *gaw* 'net, spider web; jaw'
	(na-)li-havuvu	'place where a type of vines grow' < *havuvu* 'vines which grow close to the sea'
	(na-)li-kalim	'house' < *kalim* 'house'
	(na-)li-ur	'garden' < *ur* 'place, mainland, land (as opposed to sea)'/PNCV *ʔuta* 'inland, bush, garden, place, time'
	(na-)li-vanin	'place for walking/hunting (ancestral land where one is allowed to roam)' < *vanin* 'walking'
b.	*(na-)li-hayhay*	'jungle' < *hay* 'tree'
	(na-)li-(mar)maru	'coconut plantation' < *maru* 'coconut (palm)'
	(na-)li-rongrong	'mangroves' < *rong* 'mangrove tree'
	(na-)li-varvar	'rocky place' < *var* 'stone'
c.	*(na-)li-kakao*	'coconut plantation' < *kakao* 'cocoa' (borrowing)
d.	*(na-)li-marog*	'evening, night' < *marog* 'cloud'
e.	*(na-)li-vor*	'passage (for boats)'
	(na-)li-veraur	'firm ground (as opposed to swamp)'
	(na-)li-mabnaur	'one's inherited land used as garden'
	(na-)li-vhe(a)r	'noon, lunchtime'
f.	*(na-)l-ur*	'small island' < *ur* 'land (as opposed to sea)'/PNCV *ure* 'island'
	(na-)l-woy	'river' < *woy* 'fresh water'
	(na-)la-bur	'hole' < *bur* 'hole'

3.3.3.4   *Common nouns derived with the prefix* **vi-**

A few common nouns denoting a variety of semantic categories (flora, fauna, body parts, abstract nouns) feature the prefix *vi-*. The attested examples are listed in (3.17). These nouns always feature *na-*accretion. Some of the nouns feature the suffix *-in* but others do not. There is both synchronic and diachronic evidence that *vi-* is a prefix or similar morpheme, as demonstrated by the examples in (3.17a). The example in (3.17b) suggests that *vi-* may be productive, as it can be attached to relatively recently borrowed stems. The etymology of the nouns in (3.17c) is unclear.

(3.17) Common nouns with the prefix *vi-*

	noun	gloss, comment, PNCV reconstruction (Clark 2009)
a.	*na-vi-hay*	'fruit, plant-based food' < *hay* 'tree, plant'
	na-vi-gamuj-in	'first time' < *gamuj* 'before, past'
	na-vi-lahlah	'whiteye (Zosterops)' < PNCV **laka=laka*
	na-vi-mer	'common emerald dove' < PNCV **mwara-ki* 'ground dove (Chalcophaps)'
	na-vi-huh	'hill' < *huh* 'crab'?
	na-vi-löhmar-in	'circumcision' < *löhmar* 'be easy'?
b.	*na-vi-vren-in*	'friendship' < *vren* 'friend' (Bisl.)
c.	*na-viar*	'k.o. yam'
	na-vilëgawin	'knowledge'
	na-vidrmag	'heart'

3.3.3.5   *Common nouns derived with the prefix* **mali-**

The prefix *mali-* is likely related to *malen* 'bed, one's allocated space' and can derive nouns that refer to a place, where something is or where something happens. The nouns derived in this way have not been attested with *n(V)-*accretion but otherwise function as common nouns. For example, they can be preceded by the local preposition *lön*, which is a characteristic of common nouns. They do not exhibit the morphosyntactic behaviour typical for local nouns (see §3.5).

The dataset in (3.18) lists the attested nouns derived with *mali-*.

(3.18) Nouns derived with the prefix *mali-*

	noun	gloss, comment
a.	*mali-paj-in*	'place to sleep, house, bedroom, bed' < *paj* 'sleep
	mali-pahraj-in	'bank' < *pahraj* 'store'
	mali-(subb)subb-in	'place to sit' < *subb* 'sit down'
	mali-roh-in	'residence, living space' < *roh* 'stay, live (in a place)', *rohin* 'living, life(style)'
	mali-lös-in	'bathing place, bathroom' < *lös* 'bathe'
	mali-pësan-in	'school' < *pësan* 'teach'
	mali-swah-in	'hiding place' < *swah* 'hide'
	mali-panün-in	'kitchen' < *panün* 'cook'
	mali-kan-in	'place for eating, dining room' < *kan* 'eat'
b.	*mali-jëngjëng*	'a place to leave your canoe on the beach' < *jëng* 'pull one's canoe ashore'
c.	*mali-bbiag*	'taro garden' < *bbiag* 'taro'
d.	*mali-spel-in*	'place for resting' < *spel* 'rest' (Bisl.)
	mali-skul-in	'school' < *skul* 'learn, educate (oneself)' (Bisl.)

Typically, such nouns are derived from verbs and *mali-* operates in conjunction with the nominalisation suffix *-in*, as in (3.18a). Only one such deverbal noun without *-in* has been attested (in 3.18b). In (3.18c) is the sole example of a noun derived with *mali-* from another noun (and without *-in*). Finally, the examples in (3.18d) were derived from borrowings, suggesting that this derivational strategy is still productive.

3.4   Personal nouns

3.4.1   Semantic and morphosyntactic definition

The personal noun class includes personal proper names, kin terms and other animate (normally human) entities. In terms of form, their main distinctive morphosyntactic feature is that they can take the *a* personal noun marker. Some personal nouns are derived from other nouns or verbs with the help of the *li-* prefix.

Two forms have been attested that are only used as vocatives and are treated as personal nouns on purely semantic grounds, since they are not normally modified: *ita* 'father (VOC)', *ina* 'mother (VOC)'.

3.4.2   Personal noun marker *a*

The personal noun marker *a* is a proclitic and forms one phonological word with the noun it co-occurs with. It is spelled separately from the noun (unlike accreted articles on common nouns) since the Ahamb community felt that attaching *a* to the noun could create confusion, especially when it occurs with proper names.[36] A few examples of personal nouns preceded by *a*, including borrowings, are given in (3.19).

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[36] A marker with the same function and form exists in Ahamb's close relative Uluveu (Healey 2013: 60-61), where is it spelled together with the noun.

(3.19) Examples of personal nouns with *a* personal noun marker

a Taso	'Taso (a male proper name)'
a Liman	'Liman (a female proper name)'
a nana/nen	'mother'
a vavu tötöt	'grandfather'
a vavu kakav	'grandmother'
a tete	'child'
a narën	'child'
a rën	'child'
a lilegleg	'trickster'
a kampani	'a group of people' (Bisl.)
a olfala/ol	'old man' (Bisl.)

The *a* personal noun marker is optional in virtually all cases and the above examples are equally acceptable without *a*. However, in the word *armen* 'father' the noun marker appears to have fused with the stem and it always occurs with it (and therefore is spelled as one word). The common noun derived with the *ke-* prefix that is the counterpart of *armen* (namely *nakermenin* 'father') (see §3.3.3.2) suggests that the stem is *-rmen-* and *a-* is the personal noun marker, which in this case is always present (**rmen* is not a valid word in Ahamb).

Fluidity between the personal and common noun classes is possible. For example, both *rën* and *narën* refer to 'child' and behave as personal nouns, since they can be preceded by the *a* marker. The historical reconstruction **natu-na* 'his/her child' suggests that an initial form *narën* was reanalysed as *na-rën* 'ACCR-child', allowing for the form *rën* to be generated (John Lynch, pers.comm.).

An ongoing process of a personal noun being reanalysed as a common noun is suggested by the fact that some younger speakers treat the personal noun *tete* 'child' as a common noun and add the accreted article *n-* to it.

Non-human entities have also been attested with the *a* personal noun marker, e.g. the name of a ship (3.20). The animals *lipah* 'dog' and *lipus* 'cat' can appear either with the personal noun marker (3.21a) or *na*-accretion (3.21b), while most other animals, e.g. *man* 'chicken, bird',

are strictly common nouns. The choice of noun class in (3.21a) may be contextually determined – the dog is a member of a hunting party rather than simply a pet.[37]

(3.20)   *a Yasur* '[the ship] Yasur' [91-58]

(3.21)   a.   *Ra-kay*   ***a***   *lipah.*
             3DU-call   PERS   dog
             'They called the dogs.' [24-19]

         b.   *Dra-ken*   ***na***-*lipah*   *s-draru.*
             1DU.INCL-call   ACCR-dog   POSS.GNR-1DU.INCL
             'We take our dogs.' [24-8]

3.4.3   Vocative suffixes

Some personal (usually human) nouns can take a vocative suffix, which takes the shape of an extra long -*e* or -*o* with rising intonation. This suffix is optional and mainly used when the addressee is located some distance away and the extra length of the suffix together with the prosodic pattern (and sometimes higher intensity) make it easier for the addressee to hear the call.

(3.22)   Examples with the vocative suffixes -*e* and -*o*

Maryan-o 'Maryan-VOC'
Sema-o 'Sema-VOC'
ita-e 'father-VOC'

3.4.4   Personal nouns derived with the prefix *li-*

The prefix *li-* can derive personal nouns from verbs or other nouns. The derived forms are either personal names (proper nouns that are names of humans) or agent nouns. The nouns formed in this way can be preceded by the personal noun marker *a*.

Data from other Malekula languages and other Oceanic languages suggest that the prefix *li-* is most likely a reflex of POc article **dri* (Lynch 2001: 229), which was originally used to

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[37] Fluctuation between common and personal nouns has also been documented in Uluveu (Healey 2013: 61).

denote feminine objects and female names and whose function later expanded to other domains (including the common nouns listed in §3.3.3.3) (Barbour et al. 2019).

The attested personal names featuring *li-* are listed in (3.23). Female names are listed in (3.23a) and male names in (3.23b). Where possible, etymological references are given.

(3.23)		Female (a) and male (b) personal names formed with *li-*	
		name	etymology, comment
	a.	*Liman*	< *man* 'bird'
		Libong	< *bong* 'day'
		Lidrabag	< *dra* 'native lychee (Pometia pinnata)' + *bag* 'banyan tree'
		Lidradra	< *dra* 'native lychee (Pometia pinnata)'
		Lingisngis	
		Livohvoh	
		Livalo	
		Limovoh	
		Litör	The name of a female evil spirit
	b.	*Livernabet*	
		Lihrohsdem	
		Likovman	
		Livenbbëbhaw	The name of a male evil spirit
		Limahnaur	The name of a male evil spirit. < *mah* (see discussion below) + *naur* 'place'

Agent nouns formed with *li-* display a variety of different morphosyntactic combinations. Such nouns can be derived from intransitive verbs, in which case the verb stem tends to be reduplicated (3.24a). It is also possible for an agent noun to be derived from a transitive verb on its own (3.24b) or together with its object (3.24c). The whole predicate can be involved in the agent noun derivation also when it is comprised of an intransitive verb + adjunct as in (3.24d), where the local noun *gamuj* 'past' constitutes a temporal phrase. The example in (3.24e) is derived from a noun and a stative verb/adjective (see §7.2.2). The example in (3.24f) demonstrates that an agent noun can be derived from a verb and an adjunct. It also provides evidence that this derivational strategy is still productive in Ahamb.[38] The example in (3.24g) is unusual because the noun (object) involved includes *n(V)*-accretion, which is not normally the case in other such derivations (e.g. those in 3.24c) or noun compounding in general (see §3.6.1). The three kin terms in (3.24h) are derivations from other personal nouns

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[38] The noun *ligasnyusilan* refers to people from the Ahamb community who travel to New Zealand to take part in the Recognised Seasonal Employment scheme (RSE) (see §1.3.4).

with the help of the morpheme *mah*, which has not been attested as an independent word in Ahamb. It could be a reflex of POc **mʷaqane* 'man' or **tamʷataq* 'living person' (Ross, Pawley & Osmond 2016: 43, 51) and is likely cognate with Neverver *nemakh* 'denizen' (Barbour 2012: 92). Interestingly, even though *ras-ën* 'younger brother' and *pen-ën* 'sister' are directly possessed nouns and can take different possessive suffixes in place of *-ën* (see §5.2.1), this is not possible for the *li*-derivations listed in (3.24h).

(3.24)	Agent nouns formed with *li*-	
	noun	gloss, comment
a.	*li-legleg*	'joker, trickster' < *legleg* 'joke, play tricks'
	li-pëjpëj	'liar' < *pëj* 'lie'
	li-yesyes	'canoe bailer (a person who bails water out of a canoe)' < *yesyes* 'bail out (a canoe), scoop water out (of a canoe)'
b.	*li-mrahs*	'a man who does not allow his wife to go out often' < *mrahs* 'block/not allow (one's wife to go out often)'
c.	*li-ppur-maru*	'copra buyer' < *ppur* 'buy, trade' + *maru* 'copra'
	li-jiji-maru	'copra worker' < *jiji* 'shell out (copra)' + *maru* 'copra'
	li-jav-wog	'canoe maker' < *jav* 'cut' + *wog* 'canoe'
d.	*li-roh-gamuj*	'first-born child/boy' < *roh* 'stay, be located' + *gamuj* 'past'
e.	*li-ben-redrredr*	'Caucasian person' < *ben* 'body' + *redrredr* 'be white'
f.	*li-gas-nyusilan*	'seasonal worker in New Zealand' < *gas* 'work' + *nyusilan* 'New Zealand'
g.	*li-prag-naburhej*	'grave digger' < *prag* 'make' + *na-burhej* 'grave'
h.	*li-mah-rasën*	'younger brother' < *rasën* 'younger brother'
	li-mah-penën	'sister' < *penën* 'sister'
	li-mah-sista	'sister' < *sista* 'sister' (Bisl.)

3.5 Local nouns

The class of Local Nouns in Ahamb has been inherited from Proto-Oceanic where this class includes proper place names (toponyms), familiar places in the speaker's immediate environment, directly possessed locative part nouns ("inside", "above", "beneath" etc.) and temporal nouns (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 69).

Local nouns in Ahamb are a small closed class. They can be further divided into local nouns with spatial meaning and local nouns with temporal meaning. Spatial local nouns (SLNs) refer to spatial reference points. Temporal local nouns (TLNs) refer to temporal settings.

There are a few distinguishing morphosyntactic features of local nouns. Firstly, they normally constitute a local/temporal phrase. Secondly, they differ from common nouns in that they cannot take *n(V)*-accretion and cannot form local/temporal phrases using the preposition *lön* (see §3.3.1). This section discusses in detail the different subclasses of local nouns and their morphosyntactic behaviour. The last two subsections look closely at the relationship between some local nouns and their corresponding common nouns, and at the local nouns' ability to modify common nouns as a strategy to be involved in wider syntactic functions.

3.5.1   Spatial local nouns (SLNs)

SLNs in Ahamb can be divided into subtypes. Ahamb's SLNs are listed in Table 3-2. One subtype of SLNs are nouns that denote universal reference points. A second subtype includes SLNs that denote geomorphic reference points, meaning reference points that are specific to Ahamb's geography. These nouns are listed in rows (a-d) in Table 3-2. The interrogative *bi* 'where' is also treated as a SLN (row e). Another subtype of SLNs are toponyms (place names) (row f).

SLNs can be preceded by the spatial local noun marker *a*,[39] and are commonly preceded by the verb *vi* 'go to'.[40] SLN marking with *a* is optional – it is common with some nouns while others never (row b) or hardly ever (row f) appear with it. All SLNs can be preceded by *vi,* when they denote destination of movement. For some nouns *vi* and *a* can co-occur, while with others this is not a possibility (rows b-f). Some nouns can denote position on their own without *a*, while others cannot (rows a, c). The rightmost column summarises the marking possibilities for each noun. Especially striking is the variation in marking possibilities in SLNs that denote universal reference points. These nouns are commonly used and this variation cannot be attributed to lack of data. No hypothesis for this variation will be given here. The geomorphic SLNs in row (a) commonly modify the common noun *naur* to express temporal entities; this is discussed in detail in §3.5.4.

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[39] This marker/preposition is homophonous but different from the personal marker, see §3.4.2.

[40] There is evidence to treat *vi* as a preposition – it mostly appears in its bare form preceding the local noun. However, less commonly, it can precede the noun in an inflected form, e.g. with a subject index. When it appears in its bare form, it virtually always follows other verbs in serialisation-like constructions. It can be argued that *vi* is a verb which is in the process of being grammaticalised to a preposition. It is treated here as a verb.

Table 3-2. Spatial local nouns (SLNs)

	universal reference points	geomorphic reference points	marking possibilities			
			a X	*vi X*	*vi a X*	*X*
a.	*jüdr* 'away, in the distance'	*im* 'village, settlement' *ur* '(place on) dry land; mainland Malekula' *ras* 'sea; shore (as opposed to inland area)'	✓	✓	✓	✗
b.	*vare* 'outside'	*likalim* 'home, house' *lihayhay* 'jungle, (forested) hillside'	✗	✓	✗	✓
c.	*pen* 'down, below'	-	✓	✓	✗	✗
d.	*mhar* 'up, above'	-				
e.	*bi* 'where'					
f.	toponyms, such as names of islands (e.g. *Ahamb, Malekula, Santo, Avok, Tana*), villages and towns (e.g. *Turak, Rebe, Renaur, Labur Bahur, Farun, Hokai, Lamap, Aulua, Vila*), countries (e.g. *Vanuatu, Fiji, Nyusilan* 'New Zealand') etc.	(✓)	✓	✗	✓

3.5.1.1 SLNs encoding position

Both SLNs marked with *a* and unmarked SLNs can form locative phrases denoting position (without any further marking, such as by prepositions). The examples in (3.25) illustrate the use of SLNs marked with *a*.

(3.25) a. *Nhay ili nga-rohroh **a** **jüdr** habat.*
Tree ANA 3SG-stay LOC away very
'The tree is very far away.' [252-12]

  b. *Ka-karëv ke-rs nren parne **a** **pen.***
2SG-look 2SG.SEC-see man QNT LOC below
'You see all the men down there.' [21-112]

  c. *lön naburun hay ili **a** **mhar***
LOCP inside tree ANA LOC above
'up there inside the tree' [29-11]

  d. *Ra-rah **a** **im** s-mato.*
3DU-get.married LOC village POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL
'They got married in our village.' [72-13]

e. *Mri-ro-paj*   ***a   bi?***
    2DU.IRR-IPFV-sleep LOC   where
    'Where are you sleeping?' [18-213]

f. *ato **a   Santo***
    3PL   LOC   S.
    'the people in Santo' [35-91]

g. *Na-rohroh*   ***a   Lamap.***
    1SG-be.located LOC   L.
    'I am in Lamap.' [232-46]

The examples in (3.26) illustrate the use of unmarked SLNs forming locative phrases denoting position.

(3.26) a. *Windo   nga-jëngav   **mhar.***
            Window   3SG-be.open   above
            'The window up there is open.' [30-31]

b. *Nren drës bi   rohroh   **vare.***
    Man   INDF   NEGMOD   be.located   outside
    'No one can be outside.' [23-100]

c. *Ta-subb   roh   drwan-i   **likalim.***
    3PL-sit   be.located   with-OBJ   house
    'They sit with him in the house.' [90-39]

d. *va-kaw   bbwas   **lihayhay.***
    GO-hunt   pig   jungle
    '[We] go and hunt pigs in the jungle.' [24-8]

e. *Nga-roh   **Farun** je **Renaur** je **bi?***
    3SG-be.located F.   or R.   or   where
    'Is it in Farun or Renaur or where?' [107-94]

f. *Na-r-salëm-ni   **Lamap**.*
    1SG-SBQT-sell-OBJ   L.
    'I will sell them in Lamap.' [55-88]

3.5.1.2 *SLNs encoding destination of movement*

Examples of destination of movement expressed by SLNs with the verb *vi* 'go to' are listed in (3.27) and (3.28), exemplifying *vi* with different local nouns. In (3.27), SLNs are preceded by *vi* without any additional marking:

(3.27) a. *...tör-plëv-i*   *vi*   *ur*.
3PL.SEC-pull-OBJ   go.to   land
'… then they pulled it [the canoe] on shore.' [42-15]

    b. *Nga-ro-gam* *vi*   *ras.*
3SG-IPFV-go go.to sea
'He was running to the sea.' [111-42]

    c. *Na-ruru*   *vi*   *im.*
1SG-return go.to village
'I return to the village.' [201-129]

    d. *Drata-van*   *vi*   *likalim!*
1PL.INCL-go go.to house.
'Let's go home!' [44-108]

    e. *Ra-van* *vi*   *pen.*
3DU-go go.to down.
'They (dual) went down.' [40-44]

    f. *Ta-paj-i*   *vi*   *vare.*
3PL-carry-OBJ go.to outside
'They take it outside.' [90-54]

    g. *I-ro-gam*   *vi*   *bi?*
3SG.IRR-IPFV-run go.to where
'Where is he running to?' [56-66]

    h. *Mata-ro-vi*   *mhar.*
1PL.EXCL-IPFV-go.to up
'We are going up.' [60-90]

In the examples in (3.28) *vi* introduces a local noun marked with *a*:

(3.28) a. *...mete-r-varus*   *van* *vi* *a* *ur*.
1PL.EXCL.SEC-SBQT-paddle go go.to LOC mainland
'..then we paddle to the mainland.' [69-6]

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b. *Ta-ruru* **vi** **a** **im** *s-ato*.
3PL-return go.to LOC village POSS.GNR-3PL
'They returned to their village.' [72-98]

c. *Na-ro-van* **vi** **a** **Vila.**
1SG-IPFV-go go.to LOC V.
'I am going to Vila.' [232-45]

As the examples above illustrate, constructions of *vi* + SLN, most commonly also involve verbs of motion such as *van* 'go, walk', *gam* 'run', *ruru* 'return', *pëlv* 'pull', *paj* 'carry'. The combinations of these verbs and *vi* are similar to serial verbs (see Chapter 11), either switch-function core serial verbs (3.27a,f)[41] or nuclear serial verbs (3.27b-d). In (3.27h), *vi* appears as a fully functioning inflected verb on its own.

When the speaker is located at the destination, movement to a destination is expressed with the verb *gmay* 'come' (without *vi*), as in the examples in (3.29). *Gmay* can be the sole verb of the clause as in (3.29a-b). *Gmay* can also function as a deictic marker (see §9.2.8) to encode movement in the direction of the speaker (or towards the deictic centre), without the speaker necessarily being located at the destination. In this function, *gmay* can appear in various positions within the clause (3.29c-f).

(3.29) a. *Na-r-**gmay*** *Vila*.
1SG-SBQT-come V.
'I came to Vila.' [49-34]

b. *Hayvur* *iha* *nga-ro-**gmay*** *a* *ras*.
old.man PROX 3SG-IPFV-come LOC sea
'The old man is coming to the sea.' [232-35]

c. *...ate-r-plëv-i* **gmay** *a* *ras*.
3PL.SEC-SBQT-pull-OBJ come LOC sea
'… then they pulled it (down) here to the beach.' [42-13]

d. *Mata-sar-e* **gmay** *likalim*.
1PL.EXCL-carry-OBJ come home
'We bring it home.' [73-12]

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[41] However, these examples are not prototypical switch-function SVCs since V2 (*vi*) does not carry any subject marking (see §11.3.1).

e. *Nren iha nga-varus **a ur gmay** Ahamb.*
man PROX 3SG-paddle LOC mainland come A.
'This man is paddling [his canoe] from the mainland [this way] towards Ahamb.' [232-40] (movement towards the speaker, the speaker is located on Ahamb).

f. *Napnevër iha nga-ro-paj ruru a tete*
woman PROX 3SG-IPFV-carry return PERS child

***a im gmay**.*
LOC village come
'This woman is bringing the child back from the village.' [232-42] (movement towards the speaker, not clear whether the speaker is at the destination or not)

3.5.1.3 *SLNs encoding origin of movement*

The encoding of origin of movement involves compulsory marking with the local marker *a* (for the SLNs which allow marking with *a*) but with no other marking (such as preposition). The most commonly used verb in such constructions is *van* 'go; walk'; other verbs of movement can also be involved in such constructions, e.g. *gam* 'run', *varus* 'paddle (canoe)', *ruru* 'return':

(3.30) a. *Hayug ki-van **a bi**?*
2SG 2SG.IRR-go LOC where
'Where are you coming from?' [47-34]

b. *Nahre iha i-gam **a bi**?*
boy PROX 3SG.IRR-run LOC where
'Where is this boy running from?' [232-30]

c. *Na-van **a ras**.*
1SG-go LOC sea
'I am coming from the sea/beach.' [68-53]

d. *Na-van **likalim** s-ag.*
1SG-go house POSS.GNR-1SG
'I am coming from home.' [232-28]

e. *Na-van **vare** ne.*
1SG-go outside LIM
'I am just coming from outside.' [232-38]

f. *Kalmase nga-paj nwoy **Lamap**.*
   K.   3SG-carry water L.
   'Kalmase brought water from Lamap.' [237-30]

The examples in (3.31) demonstrate the difference in encoding origin and destination of movement in the same clause.

(3.31) a. *Nahre iha nga-gam **a** **im** nge-ro-van **vi** **ras**.*
   boy PROX 2SG-run LOC village 3SG.SEC-IPFV-go go.to sea
   'This boy is running from the village towards the sea.'
   (Lit. 'This boy is running from the village, he is going to the sea.') [232-36]

b. *Nren iha nga-gam **a** **mhar** nge-ro-van **vi** **pen**.*
   man PROX 2SG-run LOC above 3SG.SEC-IPFV-go go.to below
   'This man is running down.'
   (Lit. 'This man is running from above, he is going down.') [232-37]

3.5.1.4 *Notes on toponyms*

As stated above, toponyms cover the criteria for being local nouns (they can be preceded by *a* or *vi*) but they can also be preceded by the preposition *lön*, as in (3.32), which is normally restricted to common nouns (see §3.3.1).

(3.32) *Nga-rohroh **lön** **Lasovsa**.*
   3SG-be.located LOCP L.
   'It is in Lasovsa.' [12-66]

Unlike other local nouns, toponyms can function as subjects or objects on their own, which is another similarity with common nouns. In (3.33a) the toponym *Ahamb* acts as a subject and in (3.33b) the toponym *Toman* acts as an object.

(3.33) a. ***Ahamb** nga-roh a jüdr.*
   A.   3SG-stay LOC away
   'Ahamb is over there.' [79-71]

b. *Nga-va-tut **Toman**.*
   3SG-GO-reach T.
   'It reached Toman.' [30-80]

Toponyms can also serve as verb arguments by modifying the common noun *naur* 'place', as in the examples in (3.34). This is a common feature of local nouns, which is discussed in detail in §3.5.4.

(3.34) a. ***Naur Mrimadr*** *ange perjag kiaha.*
place M. 3SG close here
'Mrimadr is close by.' [39-21]

b. *Ka-r-va-soh* ***naur Benhay****.*
2SG-SBQT-GO-reach place B.
'You are reaching Okai.' [69-64][42]

The meaning of some toponyms is transparent. For example, the village name *Vanruru*, is a combination of the verbs *van* 'go' and *ruru* 'return', because its residents are believed to have moved away and later come back to the same location.

The case of the name *Ahamb* deserves special attention here. It is generally accepted by Ahamb Islanders that the name of the island derives from *hëb* 'giant clam.' According to local legends, the reef around the island was rich in giant clams and they played a role in the settlement of the island. The island is sometimes called *Hamb* rather than *Ahamb* in colloquial speech. It is likely that the name *Ahamb* is a combination of the local marker *a* and the word *hëb.*

There are a number of toponyms that appear to be derived with the *li-* prefix. The same prefix has also been attested to derive nouns denoting locations, fauna, personal names as well as agent nouns (see §§3.3.3.3, 3.4.4). A few attested toponyms are listed in (3.35a). In (3.35b) are some toponyms that also start with *l-* and may be related to this group.

(3.35)

Toponyms starting with *li-* (a) and *l(V)-* (b)	
toponym	comment
a. *Lisah*	< *sah* 'climb'
Lipangpang	< *pangpang* 'be red'
Lisasa	
Linabbur	
Libangran	
Linorov ~ Lonarov	
Lisa	
Lihavihavi	

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[42] In Ahamb, the nearby non-Ahamb speaking village of Okai, is called Benhay.

	Livomansah	
	Lim(a)tang	
b.	*Labursur*	< *bursur* 'reef stone'
	Lovru	< *vru* 'passage (archaic)'
	Labor	
	Lasovsa	
	Lebës	
	Lëmav (a.k.a. *Lamap*)	
	Lëmanëng	
	Lohornias	
	Lohorvar	
	Lohormor	
	Lohmaw	

3.5.2 Temporal local nouns (TLNs)

TLNs denote notions related to time – parts of the day, time counters and abstract notions of time. The data set in (3.36) lists the TLNs that have been attested in Ahamb. Some TLNs can be preceded by the TLN marker *man*.[43]

(3.36)	Temporal local nouns (TLNs) in Ahamb	
	temporal local noun	Can be marked by *man*?
a.	*prahor* 'morning'	
	livhe(a)r 'noon, lunchtime'	
	tuhrav 'afternoon'	
	limarog 'evening, night'	
b.	*kiaha* 'today'	✓
	kihag 'today' (archaic)	
	lubung 'yesterday'	✓
	lovuk 'tomorrow'	✓
c.	*gamuj* 'past'	✓
	sürway 'eternity, distant past'	✓
	neroh 'always, forever'	
	nogha 'now'	

The nouns in (3.36a) denote parts of the day. They can form temporal phrases on their own, as demonstrated in (3.37). These nouns are also commonly used in greetings (see §9.9) and can modify the common noun *naur* to function as verb arguments or temporal adjuncts (see

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[43] *Man* can also precede the spatial interrogative *bi* to form a lexicalised spatial relativiser (see §4.6.6).

§3.5.4). *Limarog* has a common noun counterpart, which is discussed in more detail in §3.3.2.2.

(3.37) a. *Ka-ve   nabe   **prahor**.*
2SG-weave   mat   morning
'You weave mats in the morning.' [7-112]

b. *Ta-ro-kan   **tuhrav**.*
3PL-IPFV-eat   afternoon
'They are eating in the afternoon.' [40-31]

c. *Mata-r-sev   **limarog**.*
1PL.EXCL-SBQT-dance   night
'We will dance at night.' [201-135]

The time counters in (3.36b) can form temporal phrases on their own as in examples (3.38a-c). They are commonly preceded by *man* to modify the common noun *nabong* 'day' as in examples (3.38d-f). This function is described in more detail in §3.5.4. Example (3.38g) demonstrates that TLNs denoting time counters can be combined with TLNs denoting parts of the day to encode more specific temporal references without any specific marking.

(3.38) a. *Na-lös   **lovuk**   nemjëg.*
1SG-wash   tomorrow   simply
'I will just shower tomorrow.' [201-169]

b. ***Kiaha**   rohbay   mra-ruru.*
today   in.future   2DU-return
'You two are going back today. [44-114]

c. *Na-lös   **lubung**.*
1SG-wash   yesterday
'I showered yesterday.' [201-168]

d. *nabong   **man**   kiaha*
day   TEMP   today
'today' [38-17]

e. *nabong   **man**   lubung*
day   TEMP   yesterday
'yesterday' [72-31]

f. *nabong* ***man*** *lovuk*
   day   TEMP   tomorrow
   'tomorrow' [63-192]

g. *Drata-paj* ***kiaha limarog****.*
   1PL.INCL-sleep   today   night
   'We will sleep tonight.' [24-10]

The TLNs denoting abstract notions of time in (3.36c) manifest some variation in their morphosyntactic behaviour. *Gamuj* 'past', *neroh* 'always, forever' and *nogha* 'now' can form temporal phrases on their own, as in examples (3.39a-c). *Sürway* tends to be followed by *nog* 'already' when it refers to the distant past (examples (3.39d-e). In these cases, *nog* modifies *sürway* rather than the verb, as can be seen more clearly in examples (3.39i-j). *Sürway* tends to be preceded by the motion verb *vi* (which is commonly used with spatial local nouns, see §3.5.1.2) when it refers to the future (3.39f-g). Example (3.39g) demonstrates the listing of four TLNs in one sentence. *Sürway* and *gamuj* can be preceded by *man* to modify common nouns, as in (3.39h-j) (see also §3.5.4).

 (3.39) a. *Hana na-pësah-ni* ***gamuj.***
           1SG   1SG-give-OBJ   past
           'I gave it earlier.' [61-136]

       b *Nga-kaw vekaw* ***neroh.***
          3SG-hunt   wild.pih   always
          'He is always hunting for wild pigs.' [16-3]

       c. *Hana na-ruru* ***nogha.***
          1SG   1SG-return   now
          'I am going back now.' [106-72]

       d. *Ata-van* ***sürway*** *nog*.
          3PL-go   long.ago   already
          'They left a long time ago now.' [116-39]

       e. ***Sürway***   ***sürway***   ***nog***   *mata-palongpen naujin.*
          distant.past   distant.past   already   1PL.EXCL-hear   message
          'A long, long time ago, we heard the message.' [110-61]

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f. Hayug *ga-vuy* ***vi*** ***sürway.***
2SG   2SG-be.good go.to eternity
'You will be good forever.' [77-25]

g. *Ta-roh* *drwan* *drato* ***kiaha, lovuk, neroh***
3PL-stay with   1PL.INCL today tomorrow always

van ***vi*** ***sürway.***
go go.to eternity
'They will be with us today, tomorrow, always, until the end of time.' [78-14]

h. *nari* ***man*** ***sürway***
thing TEMP distant.past
'things of the distant past' [57-265]

i. *nari* ***man*** ***sürway*** ***nog***
thing TEMP distant.past already
'things of the distant past' [6-57]

j. *nari* *sa* *hayvur* *ngail* ***man*** ***gamuj*** ***nog***
thing POSS.GNR old.man NSG TEMP past already
'a practice of our ancestors/of the past'
(Lit. 'a thing of [our] old men of the past') [57-169]

There are also common nouns which refer to time, e.g. *(na)bong* 'day', *(na)bong ngaru* 'day after tomorrow (lit. second day)' *(n)habaji* 'month; moon' *(n)wik* 'week', *(na)sha* 'year' and *dram* 'year (archaic) (lit. 'yam', referring to the annual cycle of yam cultivation). The next subsection looks closely at some local nouns that have common noun counterparts and how they are distinguished.

3.5.3 Common noun counterparts of local nouns

The geomorphic SLNs and one TLN have common noun counterparts. The correspondences are listed in (3.40).

(3.40)	Local nouns with common noun counterparts	
	local noun	common noun
a.	*im* 'village, settlement'	*(na)im* 'village'
	ur '(place on) dry land; mainland Malekula'	*(na)ur* 'place'
	ras 'sea; shore (as opposed to inland area)'	*(n)ras* 'sea'
	likalim 'home, house'	*(na)likalim* 'house'
	lihayhay 'jungle, (forested) hillside'	*(na)lihayhay* 'jungle'
b.	*limarog* 'night (time)'	*(na)limarog* 'night'

The examples in (3.41) demonstrate the difference between the local noun *likalim* and the common noun *(na)likalim*. In examples (3.41a-b), the local noun *likalim* forms locative phrases on its own or with the motion verb *vi* as described in §3.5.1.2. Example (3.41c) demonstrates the use of the common noun (with *na*-accretion) as the subject of a verb, whereas examples (3.41d-e) demonstrate the common noun forming locative phrases with the help of the preposition *lön*. Both of these functions are reserved for common nouns. Example (3.41f), shows *likalim* serving as a subject, which means it is a common noun even though it does not feature *na*-accretion. Since *n(V)*-accretion is generally optional for common nouns (see §3.3.2.2), the presence or absence of *n(V)*-accretion is not a sufficient diagnostic and needs to be supplemented with data about the nouns' morphosyntactic behaviour as demonstrated above.

(3.41) a. *Nari   parne   mata-mas-visen   likalim.*
        thing   QNT   1PL.EXCL-NEC-have   house
        'We need to have everything at home (lit. in the house).' [41-8]

    b. *Nga-bës   vi   likalim.*
        3SG-enter   go.to   house
        'He entered the house.' [115-50]

    c. ***Na-likalim   ili   nga-jhay.***
        ACCR-house   ANA   3SG-not.exist
        'The house was not there.' [9-138]

    d. *Ka-r-tovtov-ni   lön   na-likalim.*
        2SG-SBQT-put-OBJ   LOCP   ACCR-house
        'You will put it in the house.' [47-79]

e. *Nga-lavtür   van   vi   **lön   na-likalim.***
   3SG-pass.through go   go.to LOCP ACCR-house
   'He entered the house.' [30-32]

f. *Mata-palong-ni   kar   **likalim**   nga-r-vuy.*
   1PL.EXCL-want-OBJ   COMP   house   3SG-SBQT-be.nice
   'We want our house to be nice.' [7-5]

Sentences exemplifying the difference between local and common *(na)limarog, (n)ras* and *(na)lihayhay* were given in §3.3.2.2.

The next subsection demonstrates how local nouns can modify common nouns to serve as verbal arguments, and perform other functions of common nouns.

3.5.4   Local nouns as modifiers of the common nouns *naur* 'place, time' and *nabong* 'day, time'

Some local nouns in Ahamb can modify common nouns. Most commonly this involves *naur* 'place; time' and *nabong* 'day, time', obligatorily with *na*-accretion in this function. The result is common noun phrases that refer to spatial or temporal entities. Such common noun phrases can in turn act as verbal arguments, a function otherwise unavailable to local nouns. They can also be involved in locative or temporal phrases introduced by the preposition *lön,* which encodes position or source of movement on its own or destination of movement when following the verb *vi* 'go to' + *lön.*

This strategy is commonly used and many local nouns appear more often in such phrases than on their own. On the other hand, not all local nouns can modify common nouns in this way. The attested possibilities for such modification are listed in (3.42). Modification possibilities with the common noun *naur* as head are listed in (3.42a-d). For some local nouns the marker *a* is obligatorily present (3.42a-b), while for others it is absent (3.42c-d). All three geomorphic SLNs can be involved in such constructions (3.42a). Of the universal SLNs, all but two (*jüdr* 'away' and *vare* 'outside') can modify *naur.* All TLNs, except *limarog* 'night' have been attested as modifiers of *naur.* The possibilities for *nabong* being modified by local nouns are listed in (3.42e-f). Of the abstract nouns, only *gamuj* 'past' can modify *nabong.*

(3.42) Local nouns as modifiers of the common nouns *naur* 'place, time' and *nabong* 'day, time'

	common noun phrase	analysis	local noun category
a.	*naur a ras* 'sea, shore'	*naur* 'place' + *a* + *ras* 'sea, shore'	geomorphic SLN
	naur a im 'village'	*naur* 'place' + *a* + *im* 'village'	geomorphic SLN
	naur a ur 'land, mainland'	*naur* 'place' + *a* + *ur* 'dry land, mainland Malekula'	geomorphic SLN
b.	*naur a pen* 'down, below'	*naur* 'place' + *a* + *pen* 'down, below'	universal SLN
	naur a mhar 'up, above'	*naur* 'place' + *a* + *mhar* 'up, above'	universal SLN
	naur a bi 'where'	*naur* 'place' + *a* + *bi* 'where'	universal SLN
c.	e.g. *naur Vanuatu*	*naur* 'place' + TOPONYM	toponyms
d.	*naur prahor* 'morning'	*naur* 'time' + *prahor* 'morning'	part-of-the-day TLN
	naur tuhrav 'afternoon'	*naur* 'time' + *tuhrav* 'afternoon'	part-of-the-day TLN
	naur livh(e)ar 'noon, lunchtime'	*naur* 'time' + *livh(e)ar* 'noon, lunchtime'	part-of-the-day TLN
e.	*nabong man kiaha* 'today'	*nabong* 'day, time' + *man* + *kiaha* 'today'	time counter TLN
	nabong man lovuk 'tomorrow'	*nabong* 'day, time' + *man* + *lovuk* 'tomorrow'	time counter TLN
	nabong man lubung 'yesterday'	*nabong* 'day, time' + *man* + *lubung* 'yesterday'	time counter TLN
f.	*nabong man gamuj* 'past'	*nabong* 'day, time' + *man* + *gamuj* 'past'	abstract TLN

The examples in (3.43) demonstrate the usage of the common noun phrases produced in this way with the different type of local nouns (in the same order as in 3.42). The examples also demonstrate the different syntactic functions that these phrases can have: as subject (3.43h), object (3.43a,j), temporal adjunct (3.43g,i) or as locative adjunct denoting position (3.43b,d), source of movement (3.43e) or destination of movement (3.43c). These phrases can also be involved in possessive constructions as the possessor (3.43f) or possessum (3.43c).

(3.43) a. ... *gmay soh **naur a ur.***
             come reach place LOC land
             '... [he] reached land.' [68-32]

     b. *Ta-r-han   naih **lön naur a ras.***
         3PL-SBQT-eat fish LOCP place LOC sea
         'They are eating fish at the sea (on the beach).' [93-17]

     c. *Nga-rah   van **vi lön naur a im s-en***
         3SG-get.married go go.to LOCP place LOC village POSS.GNR-3SG
         'She got married [and moved] to her husband's village.' [39-75]

     d. *Ka-ro-s   nanünün hayug **lön naur a mhar.***
         2SG-IPFV-see shadow 2SG LOCP place LOC above
         'You see your shadow above [on the cave's ceiling].' [89-76]

     e. *Hayug **naur a bi***?
         2SG   place LOC where
         'Where are you from?' [79-109]

     f. *Nahs-en   **naur Vanuatu** ange New Hebrides.*
         name-CNSTR place V.   3SG   NH
         'The name of Vanuatu was New Hebrides.' [14-113]

     g. ***lön naur tuhrav** iha*
         LOCP time afternoon PROX
         'this afternoon' [76-48]

     h. ***Nabong man kiaha** nga-vi 25 okis.*
         day   LOC today 3SG-COP 25 August
         'Today is the 25th of August.' [68-1]

     i. *nrahin   s-aru   **lön nabong man lubung***
         marriage POSS.GNR-3DU LOCP day   LOC today
         'their marriage [which took place] yesterday' [72-17]

     j. *Rohbay   na-sëlvar   husür **nabong man gamuj.***
         in.future 1SG-tell.story follow day   TEMP past
         'I am going to tell a story about the past.' [91-11]

In related constructions, *naur* can act as subject of the verb *vi* 'be, become' that takes a TLN as a predicate:

(3.44) *Naur   nga-**vi**   **limarog**.*
        place   3SG-become   night
        'Night fell.' [72-90]

Naur can also act as a subject for a small number of verbs related to the physical environment. These constructions are discussed in more detail in §9.2.1.2. However, two of these verbs are of interest to the current discussion. The active verbs, *mtas* 'become dawn', *ponpon* 'become dusk', can follow *naur* to form common noun phrases that mean 'the bright part of the diurnal cycle'[44] and 'heathen times' respectively. Examples (3.45a-b) demonstrate the use of the inflected verbs as predicates; examples (3.45c-d) demonstrate the use of the verbs as modifiers of *naur*. This type of modification is reminiscent of the type of modification with the local nouns denoting parts of the day, but they have specific meanings. Example (3.45d) also shows how *mtas* and a prototypical TLN can modify *naur* in one phrase.

(3.45) a. *Naur   nga-mtas.*
            place   3SG-be.dawn
            'The day broke.' [9-87]

       b. *Naur   nga-ponpon.*
            place   3SG-be.dusk
            'Dusk fell.' [201-224]

       c. *napragin   **naur**   **ponpon***
            doing   place   dusk
            'the heathen customs' [21-4]

       d. *lön   **naur**   **mtas**   man   kiaha*
            LOCP   place   dawn   TEMP   today
            'today (referring to the bright part of the day)' [28-31]

In examples (3.39h-j) in §3.5.2, the TLNs *sürway* 'eternity, distant past' and *gamuj* 'past' modify the common nouns *nari* 'thing' and *hayvur* 'old man' with the help of the marker *man*. These are the only two examples of such modification. This is not a common feature of the language but it demonstrates once again the wide functional load of local nouns.

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[44] This is often the part of the day when work and related activities take place.

3.6   Compounding

Compounding is a process of combining two free forms. There are different criteria for distinguishing compounds from phrases. Phonologically, compounds normally form a single phonological word with one primary stress. A morphosyntactic criterion is that other morphemes cannot interfere between the components of the compound (Aikhenvald 2007: 24-27). Semantically, compounds express an idea that normally has semantic value that is additional to the combination of the meaning of its two components, even if a compound can be paraphrased (Payne 2006: 45; Aikhenvald 2007: 28).

According to one or more of the above criteria, some Ahamb nouns can be treated as compounds. This subsection discusses the attested strategies for noun compounding. Most commonly, compounds are produced by the combination of two nouns (see §3.6.1), with different levels of morphosyntactic juncture, including some possessive constructions that can be treated as lexicalised compounds. Less commonly, a noun and a verb can be compounded (see §3.6.2). Most compound nouns are common nouns, but some personal compound nouns have also been attested (see §3.6.3). Section 3.6.4 discusses two nouns that can form complex nominal heads with other nouns.

3.6.1   Noun + noun compounds

In Ahamb, the simple juxtaposition of two nouns can form a compound. Some examples are listed in (3.46). Such compounds can have different metaphoric meaning, where the second noun can describe a location (3.46a), a narrowing description (3.46b) or a purpose (3.46c), where the second noun is commonly a deverbal nominalisation (see §3.3.3.1). The second noun in such compounds is usually a common noun, which can appear with or without *n(V)-*accretion. One example of a compound with a local noun as the second element is listed in (3.46a) (*nvare pen*). The nouns in (3.46d) all refer to body parts where the resulting compounds are directly possessed nouns of Type B, i.e. they do not take a possessive or construct suffix (see §5.2.5).

(3.46)	Noun+noun compound nouns	
a.	*nrang nalibar* 'swamp fly'	*nrang* 'fly' + *(na)libar* 'swamp'
	nabur var 'cave'	*nabur* 'hole' + *(n)var* 'stone'
	nvare pen 'earth'	*nvare* 'place, country' + *pen* 'down, below' (local noun)
	nvare mav 'heaven'	*nvare* 'place, country' + *(n)mav* 'sky, heaven'
	nhay gamuj 'first-born child'	*nhay* 'stick' + *gamuj* 'past'
b.	*nrang bi* 'bee'	*nrang* 'fly' + *bi* 'bee' (Bisl.)
	nappur maru 'ripe coconut flesh'	*nappur* 'flesh of ripe coconut' + *(n)maru* 'coconut'
c.	*nalikalim lötuin* 'church, chapel'	*nalikalim* 'house' + *(na)lötuin* 'worship'
	nalikalim nabangsin 'prison'	*nalikalim* 'house' + *(na)bangsin* 'tying, limitation' (< *bangs* 'tie up'
	nalikalim skul 'school building'	*nalikalim* 'house' + *(n)skul* 'school'
	naim napësanin 'school'	*naim* 'village' + *(na)pësanin* 'teaching'
	nren napësanin 'teacher'	*nren* 'man' + *(na)pësanin* 'teaching'
	nren nahusürin 'disciple'	*nren* 'man' + *(na)husürin* 'following' (< *husür* 'to follow')
d.	*navërvër basën* 'beard'	*navërvër* 'hair' + *(n)basën* 'cheek'
	nabur narvon 'dental cavity'	*nabur* hole + *(na)rvon* 'tooth'
	nasvër barën 'hair (on head)'	*nasvër* hair + *(n)barën* 'head'
	kankudr barën 'skull'	*kankudr* 'skull' + *(n)barën* 'head'
	gaj(gaj) navren 'finger'	*gaj(gaj)* 'finger' + *navren* 'hand'
	gaj(gaj) narin 'toe'	*gaj(gaj)* 'finger' + *narin* 'foot, leg'

The compounds listed in (3.46d) above denote body parts where the first noun is a Type B inalienable noun (i.e. non-suffixed, see §5.2.5). The three nouns listed in (3.47a) below, however, involve a direct possessive construction with the first noun featuring the construct suffix (i.e. they are Type A nouns, see §5.2.1), while in (3.47b), the first noun is a Type A-like noun that denotes parts of a larger whole (see §5.2.4).

(3.47)	Compounding through direct possession	
a.	*navrën namren* 'eyelash, eyebrow'	*navrë-n* 'hair-CNSTR' + *namren* 'eye'
	nbarën hay 'tree trunk'	*nbarë-n* 'trunk-CNSTR' + *nhay* 'tree' (*nbarën* has the primary meaning 'head')
	naburun var 'cave'	*naburun* 'inside' + *var* 'stone'
b.	*naven maru* 'coconut fruit'	*naven* fruit + *maru* 'coconut'
	namren navës 'arrow'	*namren* 'arrow; eye' + *navës* 'bow'

Besides juxtaposition of two nouns and the direct possessive construction, some noun+noun compounds in Ahamb constitute indirect possessive constructions that have lexicalised. Examples are given in (3.48). Many such nouns involve the possessor *abat* 'foreigner' and constitute metaphorical expressions that refer to items or phenomena introduced to Vanuatu as part of Western European colonisation and subsequent contact with outsiders, such as the nouns in (3.48a). For example, the noun *naujin sa abat* is a collective term for the languages introduced to Vanuatu as part of colonisation – English, French and Bislama. The term is often used as an antonym or opposition of *naujin sdrato* '(lit.) our language', which is how Ahamb islanders normally refer to the Ahamb language (see §1.1). *Naujin sdrato* (3.48b) is an example of a lexicalised indirect possessive construction with a pronominal possessor. The two nouns listed in (3.48c), refer to sea creatures that have an ecological relationship with a bird that is commonly seen on the reefs around Ahamb Island. *Naher ha limu* 'brittle star' is the only attested compound which involves the alimentary possessive classifier. These longer phrases often involve more than one stress but their idiomacity provides evidence for treating them as compounds. Syntactically, these nouns also function as one unit. For example, when they act as the head of a noun phrase, no other modifiers can interfere between the possessum and the possessor, which the structure of Ahamb's noun phrases otherwise allows (see §6.3).

(3.48)	Compounding through indirect possession	
a.	*nabrav sa abat* 'papaya' (lit. 'foreign breadfruit')	*nabrav* 'breadfruit' + CLF.GNR + *abat* 'foreigner'
	nabbiag sa abat 'Fijian taro'	*nabbiag* 'taro' + CLF.GNR + *abat* 'foreigner'
	navüj sa abat 'Chinese banana'	*navüj* 'banana' + CLF.GNR + *abat* 'foreigner'
	nwog sa abat 'ship' (lit. 'foreign canoe')	*nwog* 'canoe' + CLF.GNR + *abat* 'foreigner'
	naujin sa abat 'colonial languages'	*naujin* 'language' + CLF.GNR + *abat* 'foreigner'
b.	*naujin sdrato* 'Ahamb language' (lit. 'our language')	*naujin* 'language' + CLF.GNR-*drato* '1PL.INCL'
c.	*naher ha limu* 'brittle star (k.o. small octopus like creature)'	*naher* 'octopus' + CLF.ALIM + *limu* 'Pacific reef heron' (a type of bird that eats brittle stars)
	nhay golgol sa limu 'sea urchin' (lit. 'heron's nest')	*hay golgol* 'nest' + CLF.GNR + *limu* 'Pacific reef heron'

3.6.2 Noun + verb compounds

Some noun + verb compounds are listed in (3.49). The verbal component can describe various distinctive features of the resulting nominative meaning. Most commonly, the verb describes the purpose for which the noun is used, which is especially common with the noun *nari* 'thing' (3.49b), which is used commonly and productively to produce neologisms, especially for imported technologies, which can otherwise be referred to with borrowings. The two nouns in (3.49c) include stative verbs. Otherwise, active verbs are more commonly found in compounds (3.49a-b), often in reduplicated form (see §7.8.2 on the plurality function of reduplication). *Hayjimaru* 'tool for shelling out copra' (3.49d) is an example of a compound which involves a transitive verb and its object.

(3.49)	Noun+verb compounds	
a.	*nwoy münmün* 'drinking water'	*nwoy* 'water' + *mün* 'drink' (reduplication)
	nmaru münmün 'drinking (young) coconut'	*nmaru* 'coconut' + *mün* 'drink' (reduplication)
	nrang tamës 'cyclone'	*nrang* 'wind' + *tamës* 'hit'
	nil sadr 'sewing needle'	*nil* 'needle, nail' + *sadr* 'sew'
b.	*nari gas* 'tool'	*nari* 'thing' + *gas* 'work'
	nari gamgam 'truck'	*nari* 'thing' + *gam* 'run, ride, drive' (reduplication)
	nari (kan)kan 'plate'	*nari* 'thing' + *kan* 'eat' (optional reduplication)
	nari münmün 'cup'	*nari* 'thing' + *mün* 'drink' (reduplication)
	nari ujuj 'telephone'	*nari* 'thing' + *uj* 'talk' (reduplication)
	nari ravrav 'camera'	*nari* 'thing' + *rav* 'take' (reduplication)
	nari mëmrah 'aircraft'	*nari* 'thing' + *mrah* 'fly' (partial reduplication)
c.	*nkanin bonbon* 'get together, party'	*nkanin* 'food, eating' + *bonbon* 'be together'
	nben redrredr 'white-skinned person'	*nben* 'body' + *redrredr* 'be white'
d.	*hayjimaru* 'tool for shelling out copra'	*hay* 'wood, stick' + *ji* 'shell out' + *(n)maru* 'copra'

3.6.3 Compound personal nouns

The compound nouns described above are exclusively common nouns. There are a few personal nouns that are compounds. A few examples are listed in (3.50). These nouns are also discussed in §4.2.1.

(3.50)	Personal compound nouns	
	tata kiki 'young uncle'	*tata* 'uncle' + *kiki* 'be small'
	veve rëvëh 'middle aunt'	*veve* 'aunt' + *rëvëh* 'middle'
	vavu tötöt 'grandfather'	*vavu* 'grandparent' + *tötöt* 'grandfather'
	vavu kakav 'grandmother'	*vavu* 'grandparent' + *kakav* 'grandmother'

3.6.4 Complex nominal heads

In Ahamb, nominal modifiers normally appear after the head of a noun phrase. However, two common nouns that specify size, namely *nabëltën/nabëltri* 'big one, giant' and *narëh(tën)* 'small one' can appear before other nouns. These combinations of nouns are fully compositional so they do not fit the criteria for compounds. Therefore, they are treated as complex nominal heads here. Examples are given in (3.51).

(3.51)   a.   **nabëltën**   *nakujkuj*
           big.one   earth.oven.roast
           'big earth oven roast' [115-94]

       b.   **nabëltri**   *barën*   *marer*
           big.one   trunk   redwood
           'big redwood tree' [89-89]

       c.   **narëh**   *sel*
           small.one   knife
           'small knife' [504-13]

CHAPTER 4.   NOMINAL MODIFICATION

4.1   Introduction

Nominals in Ahamb can take a number of different modifiers. Some modifiers can co-occur with all, or more than one type of nominals, whereas others are specific to a class of nouns. Common nouns allow for the largest variety of modifiers. This chapter includes a discussion of the possible nominal modifiers in Ahamb, including relative clauses. Possessive constructions are dealt with in Chapter 5. The structure of the noun phrase, i.e. the ordering possibilities for nominal modifiers and the head, are discussed in Chapter 6.

4.2   Lexical modifiers

Oceanic languages do not normally have an open class of adjectives that have both predicative and attributive function and if such a class exists, it is a small closed set of uninflected forms (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 40). Instead, "adjectival" modification is normally expressed by stative verbs, which, in this function, can be inflected, uninflected or placed inside a relative clause, or by nouns (Ross 1998). In Ahamb, a number of stative verbs can modify nominals and there is a small class of uninflected true adjectives. In some cases, nouns can modify a nominal.

4.2.1   Stative verbs as modifiers of nominals

In Ahamb, stative verbs normally modify a noun as part of a relative clause, either introduced by a relativiser or in a zero-marked relative clause (see also §§4.6.1, 4.6.7). Most numerals in Ahamb behave in a similar way; they are discussed in more detail in §§4.10, 6.3, 6.4.

A few stative verbs that denote e.g. colour or physical properties can modify nouns with their bare stems. A list of such verbs is given in (4.1).

(4.1)	Some stative verbs that can modify nouns	
	mer(mer)	'be black'
	redr(redr)	'be white'
	yangyang	'be yellow'
	melkiki	'be small'
	kiki	'be small'
	leb/lab	'be large'

blav	'be long'
lugus	'be many'

Some examples of stative verbs modifying noun heads are listed in (4.2). Example (4.2a) demonstrates the use of a bare stem in adjectival function. Bare stative verb stems have been attested in this function in other Malekula languages, e.g. Neverver (Barbour 2012: 118) and Unua (Pearce 2015: 163). Stative verbs inflected with a third-person subject index can serve the same function. In those cases, the subject index's number can agree with the number of the noun (4.2b) or the singular form can be used as in (4.2c-d). Example (4.2d) also demonstrates the optionality of the subject index in such modification. Example (4.2e) demonstrates the use of an inflected stative verb which modifies the noun and is included in a relative clause marked with the relativiser *aven*. Relative clauses are discussed in §4.6. Finally, for the sake of contrast, example (4.2f) demonstrates the predicative function of such verbs.[45]

(4.2) a. *namer **mermer***
           snake   black
           'black snake' [252-17]

      b. *Nren **ata-lugus**   mine ata-van vi   a   ur.*
           man   3PL-be.many too   3PL-go   go.to LOC mainland
           'Many men too went to the mainland.' [3-18]

      c. *Nga-helpem mato   lön   naser **nga-lugus**.*
           3SG-help   1PL.EXCL LOCP way   3SG-be.many
           'It helps us in many ways.' [27-90]

      d. *Ra-roh   nabong **nga-lugus**,   nasha **lugus**.*
           3DU-stay day   3SG-be.many   year   be.many
           'They stayed for many days, many years.' [44-27]

      e. *Nga-pent-ni   lön   kala   **aven**   **nga-mermer**.*
           3SG-paint-OBJ LOCP colour REL   3SG-be.black
           'It [the parrot] painted it [the flying fox] in black colour.' [106-67]

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[45] Since in Ahamb both subject indexing and relative clause marking are optional, the bare stative verb stems listed in (4.1) could be treated as unmarked relative clauses with single verbal predicates. However, the frequent occurrence of these adjectives and the existence of such a special category in the related languages is considered to give enough ground to consider them as a special case.

f. *Mato*   **mata-lugus**   *habat.*
1PL.EXCL   1PL.EXCL-be.many   very
'There were very many of us.' [57-189]

The active verbs *mtas* 'become dawn' and *ponpon* 'become dusk' have been attested as modifiers of the common noun *naur* to form fixed phrases meaning 'daylight part of the diurnal cycle' and 'heathen times' respectively (see §3.5.4 for discussion and examples).

The bare stems *kiki* 'small' and *lab/leb* 'big' can combine with the nouns *ta/tata* 'uncle', *na/nana* 'aunt' and *veve* 'aunt' as part of a grading system of kinship according to age, where *kiki* signals a younger individual and *lab/leb* signals an older individual, e.g. *veve leb* 'older aunt'*, veve kiki* 'younger aunt'. These forms are treated as compound nouns (see §3.6.3).

4.2.2   True adjectives

A handful of uninflected words can modify nouns in much the same way as bare stative verb stems, but since they cannot take any inflection, they are perhaps best termed *true adjectives*. Six adjectives have been attested:

(4.3)	Ahamb true adjectives	
	timair	'left (direction)'
	tihavuy	'right (direction)'
	mnaj	'different, other'
	bus	'plain, simple, usual'
	lo	'holy'
	aven	'next' (temporal context)

The examples in (4.4) demonstrate the use of these adjectives. As the examples show, they are normally only used attributively. *Mnaj* 'different' has been attested in predicative use following the copula *vi*, as in (4.4g).

(4.4) a. *Na-r-van*   *vi*   *sësën*   **timair.**
         1SG-SBQT-go go.to side   left
         'I am going to the left.' [231-2]

    b. *nkanin*   **mnaj**
        food   different
        'different (other) food' [57-66]

c. *lön   sande   iha   je   nwik   **aven***
   LOCP Sunday PROX or week next
   'this Sunday or next week' [57-195]

d. *lön   nasha   **aven***
   LOCP year next
   'next year' [38-44]

e. *naser   **bus***
   way   plain
   'the usual (default) pattern [for mat weaving]' [7-70]

f. *pep   **lo***
   book   holy
   'the Bible' (Lit. 'the holy book') [79-11]

g. *In   nga-**vi**   **mnaj**   ay.*
   DEM.PRN.DIST 3SG-COP different EMP
   'This one is a different one.' [21-94]

4.2.3   Nouns as modifiers of nominals

A common way to form locative/temporal expressions is through a common noun phrase with the words *naur* 'place, time' or *nabong* 'time' as heads that are modified by a following local noun. This modification strategy is described in detail in §3.5.4.

The inalienable noun *jbo-n* 'oneself' can follow a personal pronoun. *Jbo-n* is a directly possessed noun and can take the possessive suffixes for the singular forms and the construct suffix for non-singular forms (see §5.2.1), as in the forms in (4.5) and the examples in (4.6). The exclusive meaning conveyed by *jbo-n* is commonly reinforced by repetition of the personal pronoun and/or the limiter *ne*, as in examples (4.6b-c).

(4.5)   Personal pronouns modified by the noun *jbon*

ahnaw jbo-g	1SG oneself-1SG	'(by) myself'
hayug jbo-m	2SG oneself-2SG	'(by) yourself'
ange jbo-n	3SG oneself-3SG	'(by) her-/him-/itself'
mato jbo-n	1PL.EXCL oneself-CNSTR	'(by) ourselves'

(4.6) a. *Nga-nov-ni   lön   **angay jbo-n***   *kar*   *...*
           3SG-think-OBJ LOCP 3SG   oneself-3SG COMP
           'He thought to himself …' [252-15]

       b. *Ahnaw   **jbo-g***   ***ne***   *na-rohroh*   *likalim.*
           1SG   oneself-1SG LIM   1SG-be.located home
           'I am at home by myself.' [232-74]

       c. *Mato   **jbo-n***   ***mato***   ***ne*** *mata-van*   *vi*   *Lamap.*
           1PL.EXCL oneself-CNSTR 1PL.EXCL LIM   1PL.EXCL-go go.to L.
           'We are going to Lamap by ourselves.' [232-59]

4.2.4 Lexical modifiers of personal pronouns

Non-singular personal pronouns can be modified by other nouns to specify some of the people involved as in the examples in (4.7).

(4.7) *maru   a   dekon   Kal Ronsën*
       1DU.EXCL PERS deacon   K.R.
       'deacon Kal Ronsën and I' [89-22]

4.2.5 Lexical modifiers of personal nouns

One personal noun can modify another personal noun as in (4.8a-b). In (4.8c), a personal noun is additionally modified by a personal pronoun. This is a common way to refer to a whole family, or to the parents/children/grandchildren of the person expressed by the modifier, when these people are taboo relatives and their names cannot be mentioned by the speaker (see §1.3.1). This type of construction and other similar constructions are known as "inclusory pronominals" (Lichtenberk 2000), or "associative plural constructions" (Mauri & Sansò 2019).

(4.8) a. *a   tavin   a   Jim*
           PERS brother-in-law PERS Jim
           '[my] brother-in-law Jim.' [91-30]

       b. *a   olfala   Yafet*
           PERS old.man   Yafet
           'Old Yafet.' [79-65]

c. *olfala   Makai   ato*
   old   Makai   3PL
   'old Makai and his family' [36-69]

4.3   Diminutive *ki*

The form *ki*, likely related to *kiki* 'be small', is a modifier which can add to a noun phrase a meaning of diminution or insignificance, or can add a hint of humility or lack of drama to the discourse. An example of *ki* with diminutive function is given in (4.9). In the story from which this example was extracted, the speaker later specifies that the bird is the small passerine bird *navilahlah* 'Vanuatu white-eye (Zosterops flavifrons)'.

(4.9)   *Nman   ki   nga-svoh   gmay.*
        bird   DIM   3SG-jump   come
        'A little bird jumped over here.' [115-56]

Ki hardly ever appears as the sole modifier of a noun and is usually combined with other modifiers such as the indefinite quantifier *drës*, various demonstratives, the relativiser *aven* or the indefinite article *aven* to form complex noun modifiers. Such complex modifiers are discussed in the relevant sections on the modifiers that *ki* can combine with. Other than that, *ki* often co-occurs with the limiter *ne*:

(4.10)   a. *naur   ki   ne*
            place   DIM   LIM
            'just this small place' [9-34]

         b. *lön   nabong   ki   ne*
            LOCP   time   DIM   LIM
            'just at this time' [57-373]

Impressionistic data suggests that *ki* appears most often, although not exclusively, in the speech of women and older men.

4.4   Non-singular *ngail* and *ngel*

The modifier *ngail* modifies nouns to specify non-singular (most often plural) number. It is often used to specify number when number is not marked in another way in the phrase and it is necessary to convey a non-singular meaning, as in the examples in (4.11). However, *ngail*

can also be used redundantly, together with other modifiers, which specify dual or plural number (see e.g. §6.3), or together with other markers of number, such as verbal inflection.

(4.11) a. *pajën   ngail*
            branch   NSG
            '(the) branches' [45-26]

        b. *napnevër   ngail*
            woman   NSG
            '(the) women' [7-4]

        c. *navihuh   ngail*
            hill   NSG
            '(the) hills [24-21]

Ngel is another form that conveys non-singular number. It can be used in the same way as *ngail,* as demonstrated in (4.12). However, this usage of *ngel* is not common. *Ngel* normally precedes other modifiers, such as the quantifiers *parne* 'every, all', *drës* 'some (INDF)', various demonstratives, the relativiser *aven* or the indefinite article *aven*, to form complex modifiers with non-singular meaning, much in the same way as the diminutive *ki* (see §4.3). Such complex forms constitute one prosodic word, which is not the case when these modifiers co-occur with *ngail*, which would normally bear its own stress. Such complex forms are discussed in detail in the relevant sections for the modifiers that *ngel* combines with.

(4.12) *Na-sar   nkanin   ngel.*
        1SG-bring   food   NSG
        'I brought the foodstuffs.' [38-15]

4.5   Demonstratives

In Ahamb, there are demonstrative determiners and demonstrative pronouns. A two-way spatial contrast (proximal versus distal) is attested with both demonstrative determiners and pronouns. Different demonstratives can be used to denote new information versus given information. Some demonstratives can also have anaphoric function. Demonstrative determiners are discussed in §4.5.1 followed by an account of demonstrative pronouns in §4.5.2.

There are other forms in Ahamb that can be deictically marked. The geomorphic and universal spatial reference systems are described in §3.5.1. Typologically, verbs meaning 'come' and 'go' can also have a deictic interpretation (Wilkins & Hill 1995); Ahamb's *gmay* 'come' and *van* 'go' can function as deictic markers (see §9.2.8). The verb *vi* 'go to' is also used to denote direction of movement away from the deictic centre (see §3.5.1.2).

4.5.1 Demonstrative determiners

There are four demonstrative determiners in Ahamb. Three of them have variants that can be either contracted forms, diminutive forms or non-singular forms. The latter two are complex forms with the diminutive *ki* (see §4.3) and the non-singular modifier *ngel* (see §4.4) respectively. All attested forms are listed in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1. Demonstrative determiners

		default form	contracted form	diminutive form with *ki* (§4.3)	non-singular form with *ngel* (§4.4)
Given information	proximal/(anaphoric)	*iha*	*ha*	*ki-ha*	*ngel-ha*
	distal/anaphoric	*in, inën*	*ën, nën*	*ki-n, ki-nën*	*ngel-ën*
	anaphoric	*ili*	*(li)*	*ki-li*	*ngel-ili*
New information		*ya*			

Ahamb's demonstrative determiners can be split as per a given-new constraint, according to whether they introduce information that is previously known or new to the addressee (see e.g. Levinson 1999: 29). Normally, *ya* introduces information that the speaker believes is new to the addressee, while the other three demonstratives introduce given information.

Iha and *in(ën)*, which normally mark spatial contrasts, may introduce what is de facto new information, but can be accompanied by a pointing (or similar) gesture, which ensures that the hearer can deduce the identity of the object that is the topic of discourse. The spatial contrast system is speaker-based, meaning that *iha* refers to objects that are near(er) to the speaker, while *in(ën)* is used for objects that are further from the speaker, regardless of whether they are close to the addressee, away from both or in the middle between the speaker and the addressee.

Ili is strictly anaphoric, referring to information that was previously mentioned in the discourse, or is otherwise retrievable from the context. *In(ën)*, and less commonly *iha*, have also been attested with anaphoric function, in cases where spatial contrast is otherwise irrelevant or unclear.

In this work, demonstratives are glossed according to their primary function – PROX for proximal, DIST for distal and ANA for anaphoric. *Ya* is glossed as DEM.

The subsections below discuss the form and function of the different demonstratives in more detail and provide some examples. Relations between demonstratives and adverbs are pointed out where appropriate.

4.5.1.1   *The proximal demonstrative* **iha**

The demonstrative determiner which generally modifies a noun denoting an object in the proximity of the speaker is *iha.* Examples are listed in (4.13). In (4.13a), the banana is very close to the speaker and the speaker is pointing to it, while the addressee can clearly see it. In (4.13b), the shark is also relatively close to the speaker and the use of the proximal demonstrative adds to the sense of urgency of the situation. As mentioned above, when the speaker introduces new information to the addressee, referring to a nearby object, the speaker refers to it by a gesture. This can also be grammatically complemented by placing the demonstrative in a relative clause as in (4.13c). In (4.13d), reference is being made to the world we live in, which is inherently close to us, inasmuch as the speaker is part of it. *Iha* is often used in temporal expressions to refer to the units of time running in the present as in (4.13e).

(4.13) a. *navüj*   **iha**
           banana   PROX
           'this banana' [85-95]

    b. *Ka-mas-jëb*   *mahobër*   **iha**.
        2SG-NEC-shoot   shark   PROX
        'You must shoot this shark.' [70-31]

    c. *nsel*   **aven**   **iha**
        knife   REL   PROX
        'this knife, that is here' [63-57]

d. *lön   vare pen **iha***
    LOCP   world   PROX
    'in this world' [53-102]

e. *lön   nalimarog **iha***
    LOCP   evening   PROX
    'this evening' [116-111]

The demonstrative determiner *iha* sometimes appears in its contracted form *ha*. *Ha* has mostly been attested as a modifier of the noun *(na)ur* 'place', in which case the phrase *(na)ur ha* can also be treated as a lexicalised adverb meaning 'here', and after the noun *nari* 'thing', in which case the contraction can be attributed to an elision of one of the two /i/ vowels that are adjacent to each other (see §2.5.3.1) in the underlying form *nari iha*. The form *ha* more commonly functions as a demonstrative pronoun (see §4.5.2).

Ha can also combine with the non-singular marker *ngel* and the diminutive *ki*, forming complex proximal determiners. In (4.14a-b) *ngelha* provides a non-singular meaning to the nouns it modifies. Example (4.14b) is one of few examples where the proximal demonstrative is used to refer to an object that is not in proximity (the books have not been bought yet), and instead has anaphoric function (the books are the topic of the conversation and were mentioned earlier in the discourse). In (4.14c), *kiha* has proximal function (the speaker is holding the money) and conveys a sense of humility by the speaker, which is the contribution of the diminutive *ki*. In (14.4d), *ha* appears with both *ngel* and *ki*.

(4.14) a. *nhayvur **ngel-ha***
            old.man NSG-PROX
            'these old men' [60-42]

        b. *Ki-va-vër   npep **ngel-ha**   a   bi?*
            2SG.IRR-GO-buy book NSG-PROX   LOC where
            'Where are you going to buy these books?' [55-145]

        c. *Ka-paj   mane   **ki-ha**.*
            2SG-carry money DIM-PROX
            'You take this (small) amount of money.' [55-90]

        d. *nahre **ngel-ki-ha***
            boy   NSG-DIM-PROX
            'these boys' [60-48]

The word *kiha* is also an uncommon variant of the local noun *kiaha* 'today' (see §3.5.2):

(4.15) *Drar-paj*   **kiha**   *limarog.*
       1PL.INCL-sleep   today   night
       'We will sleep tonight.' [24-10]

The adverb *aha* 'here' is very likely a product of the local noun marker *a* (see §3.5) and the demonstrative *ha. Aha* itself has been attested as a demonstrative, as in (4.16), although this usage is uncommon.

(4.16) *narohin*   *a*   *im*   **aha**
       lifestyle   LOC   village   here
       'the way of life in this village (here)' [38-29]

4.5.1.2 The distal demonstrative in(ën)

In(ën) is the counterpart of *iha* referring to an object that is further away from the speaker. In the sentence in (4.17), the Fijian taro is seen in the distance and *inën* has distal function. The use of *in(ën)* can be accompanied by a pointing (or similar) gesture.

(4.17) *Asi*   *nga-pan*   *nabbiag sa abat*   **inën?**
       who   3SG-cook   Fijian taro   DIST
       'Who is cooking that Fijian taro?' [201-232]

Spatial reference is relative. Nominals referring to objects that are out of reach of the speaker can be modified with the proximal demonstrative if the distance to the speaker is relatively shorter than the distance to the addressee. Perhaps most telling is the example provided by an Ahamb speaker where if a centipede were located exactly in the middle between the speaker and the addressee, it would be modified by the proximal demonstrative if it were moving towards the speaker, but by the distal demonstrative if it were moving towards the addressee (or away from the speaker).

In(ën) is commonly used as an anaphoric demonstrative, referring to things that were mentioned earlier in the same discourse without spatial reference being relevant as in the examples in (4.18).

(4.18) a. *Nahs-en   nrang tamës **inën** ange   Hariken Uma.*
name-CNSTR cyclone   DIST   3SG   Cyclone Uma
'The name of the cyclone is Cyclone Uma.' [1-6]

b. *Nga-r-vnah   nabrav   **in**.*
3SG-SBQT-steal breadfruit DIST
'He will steal the breadfruit.' [45-21]

The contracted forms *nën* and *ën* are not commonly used. They usually modify the noun *naur* 'place' as in (4.19). The phrases built in this way can also be treated as adverbs meaning 'there', similarly to *naur ha* meaning 'here' (see §4.5.1.1). *Nën* has also been attested after *nari* 'thing', where it is likely the product of elision of /i/ from an underlying *inën*.

(4.19) a. *Be   gu-van   lön   **naur ën**!*
NEGMOD   2SG.IRR-go   LOCP place   DIST
'Don't go to that place!' [20-113]

b. *Ra-va-tung   ur   **nën**.*
3D-GO-fish.with.light   place   DIST
'They are going night fishing at the/that place.' [9-22]

Ën is also the only variant of *in(ën)* which combines with the non-singular marker *ngel*:

(4.20) *narbaruh **ngel-ën** nga-ru*
girl   NSG-DIST 3SG-two
'those two girls' [9-12]

The diminutive forms of *in(ën)* are *kin* and *kinën*. Examples are given in (4.21). In *kin* there is clear evidence of elision of /i/ (*ki̱+i̱n*) (see §2.5.3.1).

(4.21) a. *nasëlvarin   ki-n*
story   DIM-DIST
'that (little) story' [70-100]

b. *nanovin   ki-nën*
thought   DIM-DIST
'that (little/insignificant) thought' [92-113]

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4.5.1.3   *The anaphoric demonstrative* **ili**

The anaphoric function of *ili* and its variants is demonstrated by the examples in (4.22) in which the nouns refer to entities that were either mentioned earlier or clear from the context of the discourse in which they appear. The function of *ili* is very similar to that of a definite article in other languages.[46] The contracted form *li* appears after words ending in -*i*, since the initial /i/ is elided (see §2.5.3.1), as in (4.22b-c). Examples (4.22d-f) demonstrate the use of the diminutive and non-singular complex forms *kili* and *ngelili*. Example (4.22g) demonstrates an uncommon case of a demonstrative modifying a personal name.

(4.22) a. *nalidumdum   ili*
        whale   ANA
        'the whale.' [79-38]

    b. *nari   li*
        thing   ANA
        'the thing' [57-358]

    c. *Wiski   li   nga-nöbb   roh.*
        wiski   ANA   3SG-full   be.located
        'The whiskey (bottle) remained full.' [91-55]

    d. *nhasu   ki-li*
        rat   DIM-ANA
        'the (little) rat' [45-38]

    e. *nahre   ki-li*
        boy   DIM-ANA
        'the (little) boy' [44-21]

    f. *narbaruh   ngel-ili*
        girl   NSG-ANA
        'the girls' [90-28]

    g. *Bongavi   li*
        B.   ANA
        'this man Bongavi' [45-27]

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[46] Demonstratives are inherently definite (Levinson 1999: 29), as are proper names. This case of redundancy of definiteness in not uncommon in Ahamb where demonstratives regularly co-occur with possessive constructions, which are also definite (see §6.3)

Ya is a demonstrative determiner used to modify a nominal that refers to an object that is introduced into the discourse, and is normally some distance away or hidden from view of the speaker. The examples in (4.23) demonstrate its usage. *Ya* is commonly used in questions to enquire about an object that has previously not been discussed, as in (4.23b). The first mention of an object in the distance can also be framed using *in(ën)*, especially when a pointing gesture is involved. Once an entity is introduced into the discourse using *ya,* other demonstratives are then used to refer to it, according to the context.

(4.23) a. *Nren* **ya**   *nga-srum   nbismur   h-en.*
            man   DEM   3SG-slurp   orange   POSS.ALIM-3SG
            'That man is slurping on his orange.' [503-29]

    b. *Nman   sa   si   ya?*
        chicken   CLF.GNR   who   DEM
        'Whose chicken is that?' [233-70]

The adverbs *aya* 'there' and *urya* 'there' are likely a result of a combination of *ya* with the locative marker *a* and the common noun *ur* 'place' respectively.

4.5.2   Demonstrative pronouns

The forms *iha* and *ha* can function as demonstrative pronouns as well as determiners. Constructions of the kind 'this is…' can be expressed with either form. When *iha* is employed, it precedes the non-verbal predicate it introduces. The predicate can be introduced immediately in a non-verbal clause (4.24a) or with the copula *vi* (4.24b). *Ha* follows a non-verbal predicate (4.24c). The interrogative clause used to elicit nouns is: *Nsveri ha?* 'What is this?', where *nsveri* means 'what'. Alternatively, *iha* can mean 'this one' as in (4.24d).

(4.24) a. ***Iha***   *nhari.*
            DEM.PRN.PROX   k.o. banana
            'This [speaker pointing] is *nhari* (a kind of banana).' [85-27]

    b. ***Iha***   *nga-vi   barme.*
        DEM.PRN.PROX   3SG-COP   island.cabbage
        'This is island cabbage.' [17-25]

c. *Male-n   ahnaw **ha**.*
   place-CNSTR 1SG   DEM.PRN.PROX
   'This is my place.' [51-44]

d. *Na-r-jëb   **iha**.*
   1SG-SBQT-shoot DEM.PRN.PROX
   'I am going to shoot this one.' [53-37]

Similarly, the distal demonstratives *in* and *inën* can function as demonstrative pronouns. Examples are listed in (4.25). In (4.25a), *inën* has distal function since the speaker is pointing to a banana tree some distance away. *Inën* is followed by a pause (marked by a comma) because it places the focus on the possessor in the following possessive construction. In (4.25b), *in* refers to the speech act in general and has a pragmatic function. The sentence in (4.25c) is an example of discourse deixis with anaphoric function, where *in* refers to a story that has just been told.

(4.25) a. ***Inën**,   nahs-en   ange   navüj sa abat.*
           DEM.PRN.DIST name-CNSTR   3SG   Chinese banana
           'That one, its name is Chinese banana.' [17-65]

       b. ***In**,   sëlvarin nga-hav   ai.*
           DEM.PRN.DIST story   3SG-finish here
           'This is it now, the story finishes here.' [24-101]

       c. ***In**   nga-vi   nasëbon   nasëlvarin.*
           DEM.PRN.DIST 3SG-COP   end   story
           'This is the end of the story.' [1-116]

The lexeme *ay* is normally an emphatic marker that can appear at the end of a clause. In some cases, *ay* may be treated as a demonstrative pronoun meaning 'this is':

(4.26) *Matamtuin s-en   **ay**.*
        power   POSS.GNR-3SG DEM.PRN
        'That is his power.' [3-41]

4.6   Relative clauses

In Ahamb, relative clauses are most commonly introduced by the relativiser *aven*. The head of the relative clause (the noun that it modifies) invariably is external with a co-referent

within the relative clause. Like other nominal modifiers, relative clauses follow their head. Ahamb's relative clauses are classified below according to the co-referent's function as either subject, object, prepositional object or possessor within the relative clause.

The default relativiser *aven* has variants that are described at the end of this section. Zero marked relative clauses are also discussed.

4.6.1 Relativising the subject position

When the coreferential argument is the subject of the relative clause, the subject position in the relative clause is left empty and the verb is encoded with a subject index. This is true both of transitive and intransitive verbs.

(4.27) a. *Nga-vi*   ***nrang tamës***   [*aven*   ***nga**-leb*   *habat*].
          3SG-COP   cyclone   REL   3SG-be.big   much
          'It was a very strong cyclone.' [1-20]

       b. *Tëga*   ***nhaw***   [*aven*   ***nga**-pës*   *gwan*   *halw-en*
          hold   rope   REL   3SG-tie   tight   neck-CNSTR

          a   *wawa*   *s-en*].
          PERS   brother   POSS.GNR-3SG
          'He held the rope, which was tightly wrapped around his brother's neck.'
          [40-151]

       c. ***napësahin***   [*aven*   ***nga**-ppur*   *gor*   *a*   *tete*   *ki-n*]
          gift   REL   3SG-buy   over   PERS   child   DIM.DEM
          'a gift, which reserves the child' [74-22][47]

Stative verbs (4.28a-b) and numerals (4.28c) often modify nouns as part of a relative clause (see §§4.2.1, 4.10).

(4.28) a. *naletuin*   [*aven*   *nga-**vuy***   *habat*]
          worship   REL   3SG-be.good   very
          'a very good worship' [52-70]

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[47] According to kastom, a man could give gifts (usually food) to the parents of a baby girl to reserve the right to marry her when she is old enough.

b. *namrivor*   [*aven*   *nga-**leb***]
    boat.landing.site   REL   3SG-be.big
    'a large boat landing site' [30-62]

c. *kayrmarin*   [*aven*   *nga-**rür***]
    prayer   REL   3SG-be.three
    'three prayers' [98-37]

4.6.2   Relativising the object position

When the coreferential argument functions as the object of the relative clause, it is usually encoded with the object index as in the examples in (4.29).

(4.29)   a.   ***Hay tataw   nhabb***   [*aven*   *mara-tab-**i***]   *nga-rür*   *ne.*
           bundle   firewood   REL   1PL.EXCL-lift-OBJ   3S-three   LIM
           'The bundles of firewood that we carried were only three in number.' [56-16]

      b.   ***Nbe***   [*aven*   *mata-kay-**ni***]   *iha*   *avngong*   *ra-bbur-i.*[48]
           song   REL   1PL.EXCL-sing-OBJ   PROX   taboo.relative   3DU-compose-OBJ
           'This song, which we will sing, was composed by my taboo relative.' [110-17]

4.6.3   Relativising the prepositional object

When the coreferential argument is the object of a preposition (see §9.2.5), the gapping strategy (zero object marking) is used with true prepositions (4.30a), the object index marks the co-referent with verbal prepositions (4.30b-d) and the possessive/construct suffix marks the co-referent with the nominal preposition *vis-en* (4.30e).

(4.30)   a.   *Nga-brah*   ***naur***   [*aven*   *narmaj*   *s-mato*
           3SG-reach   place   REL   evil.spirit   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL

           nga-rohroh   *lön*   ***Ø***].
           3SG-live   LOCP
           'He reached the place where our evil spirit lives.' [51-34]

      b.   ***barvare***   [*aven*   *drato*   *drata-ro-gas*   ***hën-i***]
           world   REL   1P.INCL   1PL.INCL-IPFV-work   GNRP-OBJ
           'the world that we are trying to create'
           (Lit. 'the world that we are working towards') [95-34]

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[48] In this example, the head noun is the object of the main clause. It is fronted with its modifying relative clause. In the main clause, an object index occurs on the verb as its trace.

c. **naser** [*aven aru ra-ro-vësan ato hën-i*]
way   REL   3DU 3DU-IPFV-teach 3PL GNRP-OBJ
'the manners that they are teaching them about' [67-7]

d. **nakemarwenin s-ag** [*aven na-roh drwan-i*]
uncle   POSS.GNR-1SG REL   1SG-stay with-OBJ
'my uncle, whom I am staying with' [90-13]

e. **nren** [*aven hana na-pësah nvar vis-en*]
man REL   1SG   1SG-give money to-3SG
'the man to whom I gave money' [234-113]

4.6.4 Relativising the possessor position

The coreferential argument can also function as the possessor in a possessive construction within the relative clause. The most commonly attested examples involve direct possession constructions (most notably a construction meaning "its name", as in 4.31a). An example with indirect possession are presented in (4.31b), where the co-referent is marked with the possessive suffix that is part of the possessive determiner.

(4.31) a. **Nman ki** [*aven nahs-en ange nasoh*] *nga-jav.*
bird DIM REL   name-CNSTR 3SG   kingfisher 3SG-sing
'A small bird, which is called kingfisher, sang.' [36-6]

b. **hayug** [*aven maurin s-am sba-vuy*]
2SG   REL   life   POSS.GNR-2SG NEG-good
'you, whose life is not good' [23-27]

The expression in (4.32) is a common phrase with the possessor of the head expressed through direct possession. The expression is often used as a synonym for a large mammal (usually cow, but sometimes also a pig), especially when it is to be sacrificed or slaughtered for a specific occasion.

(4.32) **nari** [*aven nari-n nga-vaj*]
thing REL   leg-3SG   3SG-be.four
'a cow' (Lit. 'something whose legs are four') [72-19]

4.6.5 Non-verbal relative clauses

Three relative clauses without verbs are listed in (4.33). In (4.33a) the head co-refers with the predicate of the relative clause. In (4.33b) the co-referent is the possessor in the relative clause, which involves associative possession (see §5.5.1). In (4.33c), the co-referent is the subject of the verbless predicate in the relative clause. In (4.33d), the co-referent is the possessum in the indirect possessive construction in the relative clause.

(4.33) a. *Jba-ve*   ***naser***   [*aven*   ***naser***   ***bus***   *ganha*   *ne*].
       3PL.NEG-weave   pattern   REL   pattern   simple   like.this   LIM
       'They do not weave [mats with] the pattern, which is just the basic pattern like this one here.' [27-95]

    b. ***natütüsin***   [*ngel aven*   ***hën***   *kastom*   *s-drato*   *ngail*]
       writing   NSG-REL   GNRP   kastom   POSS.GNR-1PL.INCL   NSG
       'the writings of our *kastom* (traditions)' [89-70]

    c. ***hayvur***   *s-drato*   [*ngel aven*   ***lön***
       old.man   POSS.GNR-1PL.INCL   NSG-REL   LOCP

       nasara   *s-drato*   *ngail*]
       clan   POSS.GNR-1PL.INCL   NSG
       'our old men (lit. the old men of ours) of our clans' [57-36]

    d. *Nga-vi*   ***nmetet***   [*aven*   ***sa***   *hayvur*   *ngail*   *gamuj*].
       3SG-COP   method   REL   POSS.GNR   old.man   NSG   past
       'It is a method of the ancestors of the past.' [63-170][49]

Examples (4.33b-c) feature the complex relativiser *ngel aven*. Complex relativisers are discussed in the next subsection.

4.6.6 The relativisers *ngel aven, naur aven* and *man bi aven*

Besides *aven*, two complex relativisers have been attested. The non-singular marker *ngel* can be involved in the complex relativiser *ngel aven* to provide it with non-singular meaning:

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[49] An alternative analysis of this example would be to treat *aven* as the indefinite article and the possessive phrase as a second nominal modifier. However, this analysis conflicts with the observation that the indefinite article normally follows possessive constructions within the noun phrase (see 6.19a in §6.3).

(4.34) *nahre* [*ngel aven ata-vi lön skul gamuj*]
      child   NSG-REL   3PL-go LOCP school past
      'the children, who went to school back then' [49-58]

Naur 'time, place' can function as the head of a relative clause introduced with *aven* as in (4.35a). However, in some cases, the phrase *naur aven* appears to have grammaticalised to function as a relativiser on its own where the original meaning of *naur* has been lost, as in (4.35b). *Naur aven* can also function as a temporal and conditional subordinator (see §§13.2.1.2, 13.2.3.2).

(4.35) a. *Va-soh* **naur** [**aven** *nren ngail ata-tov roh lön*].
         GO-reach place REL   man   NSG   3PL-stay be.located LOCP
         'He is reaching a place where people live.' [51-50]

     b. *Iha naven nhay* [**naur aven** *mata-ro-han-i*].
         DEM.PRN fruit tree REL   1PL.EXCL-IPFV-eat-OBJ
         'These are the fruits that we eat.' [85-42]

Another complex relativiser, which functions the same way as *aven* is *man bi aven*. It is a combination of *aven* with the temporal locative noun marker *man* (see §3.5.2) and with the locative interrogative *bi* (see §9.3.2.1). It can be used with head nouns referring to location, time or other nouns:

(4.36) a. *nabur var* [**man bi aven** *mata-visen aha*]
         hole   stone REL   1PL.EXCL-have here
         'the cave that we have here' [89-32]

     b. *lön sav taem* [**man bi aven** *mru mra-r-nov mato*]
         LOCP what time REL   2DU 2DU-SBQT-think.about 1PL.EXCL
         'at those times, when you are going to think about us' [71-694]

     c. *a libenredrredr* [**man bi aven** *nga-roh drwan mato*]
         PERS foreigner   REL   3SG-stay with 1PL.EXCL
         'the foreigner who lives with us' [98-397]

4.6.7 Relative clauses without relativisers

Relative clauses can also be expressed without a relativiser:

(4.37) a *Nga-ken   narbaruh   ili   sa   **nren** ili*
          3SG-take   girl   ANA   CLF.GNR   man   ANA

   [***nga**-roh   lön   a   Johmakuv.*]
   3SG-live   LOCP   LOC   J.
   'He took the daughter of this man who lives in Johmakuv.' [25-23]

   b. *Na-han   **bred**   ili*   [*na-vër-**i***].
       1SG-eat   bread   ANA   1SG-buy-OBJ
       'I ate the bread which I bought.' [55-116]

Zero-marked relative clauses are more commonly attested with stative verbs (4.38a), including numerals (4.38b) (see also §4.2.1).

(4.38) a. *Nga-visen   nanovkarin   [**nga-leb**]*.
          3SG-have   wisdom   3SG-be.big
          'He has a lot of wisdom.' [3-136]

   b. *habaji   [**nga-vaj**]*
       month   3SG-be.four
       'four months.' [35-28]

4.7 The indefinite article *aven*

The form *aven* can function as an indefinite article. The examples in (4.39) demonstrate this usage.

(4.39) a. *Nga-rohroh   lön   nanöbb   **aven***.
          3SG-be.located   LOCP   pool   INDF.ART
          'It is inside a pool.' [51-13]

   b. *Namer   **aven**   nga-palong-ni,   nabëltën   namer   **aven***.
       snake   INDF.ART   3SG-smell-OBJ   big.one   snake   INDF.ART
       'A snake smelled it, a big snake.' [30-24]

   c. *Nren   **aven**   nga-vër   nrais   nh-en.*
       man   INDF.ART   3SG-buy   rice   POSS.ALIM-3SG
       'Some man is buying rice for himself.' [57-13]

d. *Abat*   ***aven***   *nga-rohroh*   *Lovru*   *aha.*
    European.man   INDF.ART   3SG-stay   L.   here
    'A foreigner lived here in Lovru.' [15-40]

e. *Nren*   ***aven***   *ata-drëmdrëm.*
    man   INDF.ART   3PL-fall
    'Some men fell down.' [3-32]

Since the article *aven* is homophonous with the most common relativiser (see §4.6) and they can appear in a similar constituent frame (head noun + *aven* + verb), the meaning of some sentences can be ambiguous. In such cases, it is generally clear from the context whether *aven* functions as an indefinite article or a relativiser. For example, in the sentence in (4.40) it is retrievable from the context that *aven* is a relativiser. Outside of the context, the sentence could be interpreted as a juxtaposition of two clauses with the alternative meaning 'A foreigner came and we worked with him', where *aven* would function as the indefinite article.

(4.40) *Abat*   [***aven***   *nga-gmay*]   *mata-gas*   *drwan-i.*
        foreigner   REL   3SG-come   1PL.EXCL-work   with-OBJ
        'We worked with the foreigner who came.' [15-40]

The examples in (4.39) above demonstrate that the indefinite article *aven* can modify either a singular noun (4.39a-d) or a non-singular noun as in (4.39e), where number is marked by the subject index on the verb. Alternatively, *aven* combines with *ngel* to create a complex form that conveys non-singular meaning:

(4.41) a. *Nren*   ***ngel aven***   *jba-palong*   *habat*   *nmab.*
         man   NSG-INDF.ART   3PL.NEG-like   much   *nmab*
         'Some people do not like too much *nmab* (a mat-weaving pattern).' [7-88]

b. *nabbiag*   ***ngel aven***
     taro   NSG-INDF.ART
     'some taro' [55-69]

The complex article *ki aven* is the diminutive variant of *aven* (see §4.3):

(4.42) *Nman*   ***ki aven***   *nga-mrah*   *gmay.*
        bird   DIM-INDF.ART   3SG-fly   come
        'A little bird flew here.' [232-63]

As an indefinite article, *aven* commonly collocates with certain words to create fixed expressions. In (4.43a), *(na)bong* 'day' combines with *aven* to mean 'one day'. In (4.43b) *nari* 'thing' is followed by *aven* to mean 'something' (often undergoing coalescence to result in *nareven*, see §2.5.3.1). *Aven* can be followed by *mi* 'again' to mean 'one more, another one', as in (4.43b-c).

(4.43)　a.　***Nabong　aven****…*
　　　　　day　　　INDF.ART
　　　　　'One day…' [65-8]

　　　b.　*Mata-ro-yusum*　***nari　aven***　***mi***
　　　　　1PL.EXCL-IPFV-use　thing　INDF.ART　again
　　　　　'We use one more thing.' [61-109]

　　　c.　*nahre*　***aven***　　***mi***
　　　　　child　INDF.ART　again
　　　　　'one more child' [25-28]

4.8　The indefinite quantifier *drës*

Drës can convey indefinite (unidentified or unspecified) meaning, as in the examples in (4.44). It can modify both countable (4.44a) and uncountable (4.44b) nouns, and in both positive (4.44a-b) and negative (4.44c) clauses.

(4.44)　a.　*Nren*　***drës***　*nga-ro-gmay.*
　　　　　man　　**INDF**　3SG-IPFV-come
　　　　　'A/One man is coming.' [66-11]]

　　　b.　*Drata-mas-vër*　　*nrais*　***drës****.*
　　　　　1PL.INCL-NEC-buy　rice　　INDF
　　　　　'We need to buy some rice.' [56-105]]

　　　c.　*Sba-paj*　　*nahës*　***drës****.*
　　　　　NEG-carry　title　　INDF
　　　　　'He does not carry any titles.' [54-79]

When modifying non-singular nominals, *drës* can mean 'one of (a group)', as in the examples in (4.45). This is most commonly attested with pronominal heads as in examples (4.45a-d). When the head is a noun, non-singular marking must occur either in the form of *ngel* (as in 4.45e) or by inserting a personal pronoun as in (4.45f). In such constructions, when the

modified pronoun is the subject, the verb can take both non-singular subject index (4.45a-b,f) or a singular subject index (4.45e).

(4.45) a. ***Drato*** ***drës*** ***drata***-*r-ken-i.*
    1PL.INCL   INDF   1PL.INCL-SBQT-take-OBJ
    'One of us will take her [as a wife].' [1-99]

    b. ***Mto*** ***drës*** ***mta***-*r-gmay.*
    2PL   INDF   2PL-SBQT-come
    'One of you will come.' [57-129]

    c. *Na-pus* *hën* *atëngel* ***ato*** ***drës.***
    1SG-ask   GNRP   3PL   3PL   INDF
    'I asked one of them.' [85-71]

    d. *vis-en* ***aru*** ***drës***
    to-CNSTR   3DU   INDF
    'to one of the two of them' [57-50]

    e. ***Tete*** ***ngel-ha*** ***drës*** ***nga***-*r-han-i.*
    child   NSG-DEM   INDF   3SG-SBQT-eat-OBJ
    'One of these children will eat it.' [231-12]

    f. ***Sub*** *ya* ***ato*** ***drës*** ***ta-****mas-ken-i.*
    man   DEM   3PL   INDF   3PL-NEC-take-OBJ
    'One of these men must take her.' [231-11]

Drës can combine with *ngel* to form a complex non-singular indefinite quantifier (4.46a) or with diminutive *ki* usually to mean 'some/a little more' (4.46b) or with both (4.46c):

(4.46) a. *...dre-drëngdrëng* *naih* ***ngel drës.***
    1DU.INCL.SEC-look.for   fish   NSG-INDF
    'then we two are going to look for some fish.' [65-9]

    b. *Va-ji* *maru* ***ki drës.***
    GO-shell.out   copra   DIM-INDF
    'I will go and shell out a little more copra.' [56-94]

    c. *Nga-rav* *nabong* ***ngel ki drës.***
    3SG-take   day   NSG-DIM-INDF
    'It will take a few days.' [7-8]

With the common noun *(na)bong* 'day, time' or with the borrowing *taem* 'time', *drës* creates a phrase meaning 'someday, one day, sometimes':

(4.47) a. *Nga-r-vësan   nahre   ngail   lön   **nabong   drës**.*
3SG-SBQT-teach   child   NSG   LOCP   day   INDF
'He is going to teach the children (= become a teacher) someday.' [3-12]

　　b. ***Bong   drës   ta-prag   narog.***
day   INDF   3PL-make   laplap
'Sometimes they make (cook) laplap.' [17-71]

　　c. ***Taem   drës   drata-novkar   drata-r-pijvar.***
time   INDF   1PL.INCL-can   1PL.INCL-SBQT-swear
'Sometimes we may swear.' [66-45]

Drës often appears in combination with *mi* 'again' to mean 'one more, another one', as in the examples in (4.48). In these cases, the noun phrase can be headless because the head is clear from the context (4.48c).

(4.48) a. *Atua   mnaj   **drës   mi**   sba-gan   hayug.*
God   different   INDF   again   NEG-be.like   2SG
'There is no other God like you.' [27-5]

　　b. *Sba-kar   naujin   **ki drës   mi**.*
NEG-say   word   DIM-INDF   again
'He did not say another word.' [25-76]

　　c. *Na-r-ji   mnaj   **drës   mi**.*
1SG-SBQT-cut   different   INDF   again
'I will cut one more [banana].' [17-62]

4.9   The quantifier *parne* 'every, all'

The quantifier *parne* modifies nominals to convey the meaning of 'every, all'. It is used in some common expressions to denote 'everything' and 'everyone' as in (4.49a-b). When it modifies personal pronouns, it conveys the meaning of 'all of us/you/them' with plural pronouns (4.49c), and 'both' with dual pronouns (4.49d).

(4.49) a. *nari   **parne***
thing   QNT
'everything' [41-8]

b. *nren* ***parne***
   man   QNT
   'everyone' [23-102]

c. *drato*   ***parne***
   1PL.INCL   QNT
   'all of us' [23-65]

d. *Draru*   ***parne***   *dra-gmay.*
   1DU.INCL   QNT   1DU.INCL-come
   'Both of us came.' [56-100]

Even though *parne* inherently carries non-singular meaning, it is commonly combined with the non-singular marker *ngel* to form a complex form (see §4.4) as in (4.50a-b), and less rarely with *ngail* where they are treated as two separate modifiers as in 4.50c.

(4.50) a. *nari*   ***ngel parne***
         thing   NSG-QNT
         'all the things' [41-11]

     b. *drato*   ***ngel parne***
        1PL.INCL   NSG-QNT
        'everyone of us' [47-7]

     c. *nabong*   ***ngail***   ***parne***
        day   NSG   QNT
        'every day/all the days' [7-4]

Less commonly, the form *par* can modify a noun in the same way as *parne*, as in (4.51). *Par* is a commonly used word, which has a few different functions, including as an adverb meaning 'already' (see §§8.5, 11.2.2.2). In many cases, distinguishing which function *par* has in a specific example is not straightforward but in (4.51) *par* clearly acts as a quantifier. Etymologically, *parne* is likely a combination of *par* and the limiter *ne*.

(4.51) *Nren*   *ngel aven*   *ata-van*   *hën*   *ta-r-rov*   *naviren.*
        man   NSG-INDF.ART   3PL-go   in.order.to   3PL-SBQT-block   pool

        I-sba-vi   *nren*   *ngail*   ***par.***
        3SG.IRR-NEG-COP   man   NSG   QNT
        'Some people went to block the pool. It was not everyone.' [112-16]

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4.10   Numerals

Cardinal numbers in Ahamb follow a variety of systems. From 1 to 10 the numeral system is quinary; from 11 to 20 it is decimal. This combination of numeral systems has been attested in other Vanuatu languages (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 39) and in Austronesian languages more widely (Blust 2013: 283). In Ahamb, the numerals above twenty appear to follow a vigesimal (20-based) system. The cardinal numerals from 1 to 100 are given in (4.52).

(4.52)	Cardinal numbers in Ahamb	
	1. *nga-jhay / nga-jkenene*	21. *nrenhavuy nga-jkenene nga-jkay* (20*1+1)
	2. *nga-ru*	…
	3. *nga-rür*	30. *nrenhavuy nga-jkenene sngavur* (20*1+10)
	4. *nga-vaj*	40. *nrenhavuy nga-ru* (20*2)
	5. *nga-rëm*	50. *nrenhavuy nga-ru sngavur* (20*2+10)
	6. *nga-rëm (m)rahjkay* (5+1)	60. *nrenhavuy nga-rür* (20*3)
	7. *nga-rëm (m)rahru* (5+2)	70. *nrenhavuy nga-rür sngavur* (20*3+10)
	8. *nga-rëm (m)rahrür* (5+3)	80. *nrenhavuy nga-vaj* (20*4)
	9. *nga-rëm (m)rahpaj* (5+4)	90. *nrenhavuy nga-vaj sngavur* (20*4+10)
	10. *nga-sngavur*	100. *nrenhavuy nga-rëm* (20*5)
	11. *nga-sngavur nga-jkay/nga-jkenene* (10+1)	
	12. *nga-sngavur nga-ru*	
	13. *nga-sngavur nga-rür*	
	14. *nga-sngavur nga-vaj*	
	15. *nga-sngavur nga-rëm*	
	16. *nga-sngavur nga-rëm rëjkay*	
	17. *nga-sngavur nga-rëm rahru*	
	18. *nga-sngavur nga-rëm rahrür*	
	19. *nga-sngavur nga-rëm rahpaj*	
	20. *nrenhavuy (nga-jkenene)* (20*1)	

The forms for 1 to 5 are frequently used. The rest of the cardinal numerals have been almost completely replaced by Bislama borrowings. The numerals from 6 to 10, as well as for 20, have been recorded in natural speech, albeit more rarely than 1 to 5. The rest of the numerals listed in (4.52) have been elicited but have never been attested in natural speech. The numerals above 20 could be remembered only by a couple of elderly speakers after a short period of consideration and discussion. Numerals from 100 to 200 were also suggested,

following the vigesimal system, although with less confidence. Numerals above 200 were not suggested by the speakers.

The numeral forms are mostly stative verbs. The forms from 1 to 5, and 10 are likely reflexes of Proto-Oceanic forms (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 72). The final syllable of the form *jkenene* is likely an added limiter *ne*. Only the word for twenty, *nrenhavuy* is a common noun with optional *n*-accretion. Etymologically it is likely a compound of *nren* 'man, human', likely referring to the 20 fingers and toes of a human and *vuy* 'be.good', likely meaning 'complete'.

The verbal cardinal numerals modify nominals in the same way that stative verbs do, both in inflected and uninflected forms (see §§4.2.1, 4.6). In (4.52) these numerals are given in their stative verb form with a third-person singular subject index.

Some examples are given in (4.53). *Jkay* 'one' most often appears as a bare stem, i.e. without the verbal morphology (4.53a), whereas *jkenene* 'one' and the other verbal numerals most often appear with the third-person singular subject index (even though by definition cardinal numerals other than 'one' refer to non-singular entities) (4.53b-c).

(4.53) a. *Nga-pas   narbaruh **jkay**.*
             3SG-give.birth   girl   be.one
             'She gave birth to one girl.' [35-222]

       b. *Nga-pas   nahre   **nga-ru**.*
             3SG-give.birth   boy   3SG-be.two
             'She gave birth to two boys.' [16-64]

       c. *a   tete   **nga-ru***
             PERS   child   3SG-BE.two
             'two children' [53-8]

The verbal numerals can also be used predicatively, in which case they can take subject indexes other than third-person singular index, and other verbal morphology, as demonstrated in (4.54). In example (4.54c-d), the imperfective marker *ro-* (see §8.4) conveys a meaning of an ongoing process or approximation.

(4.54) a. *Drato   **drata**-jkenene.*
             1PL.INCL   1PL.INCL-be.one
             'We are [here] as one.' [109-5]

b. *Ka-vi   Atua   aven **ka**-jkenene.*
   2SG-COP God   REL   2SG-be.one
   'You are the only one God.' [27-4]

c. ***Ata-ro**-sngavur.*
   3PL-IPFV-be.ten
   'They are **up to** ten [people].' [3-71]

d. *Namriar   nga-**ro**-ru.*
   time   3SG-IPFV-be.two
   'It is **almost** two o'clock.' [60-53]

The stative verb *vës* acts as the numeral interrogative, meaning 'how much, how many':

(4.55) a. *Nga-jar   naih   nga-vës?*
          3SG-spear fish   3SG-how.many
          'How many fish did he spear?' [37-307]

b. *Pasta   ngail ata-vës?*
   pastor NSG   3PL-how.many
   'How many pastors are there?' [57-198]

Forms meaning 'once', 'twice' etc., have been attested as derivations of the numerals with the multiplicative prefix *vha-*: *vhajkenene* 'once; immediately, quickly',[50] *vharu* 'twice', *vharür* 'three times', *vhavaj* 'four times', *vharëm* 'five times', as well as *vhalugus* 'many times' < *lugus* 'be much, be many'. The corresponding interrogative word *vhavës* 'how many times', is described in §9.3.2.3.

(4.56) a. *Ki-van   vi   Nyusilan   **vhavës**   nog?*
          2SG.IRR-go go.to New Zealand how.many.times already
          'How many times have you been to New Zealand already?' [232-65]

b. *Na-van   **vharëm**   nog.*
   1SG-go   five.times already
   'I have been there five times already.' [232-71]

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[50] Corresponding to Bislama *wantaem.*

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Ordinals can be expressed using the combination of the word *hay* 'wood, stick' and the corresponding uninflected cardinal numeral, for example *hay ru* 'twice', *hay rür* 'three times':

(4.57) *Sësëlvarin* **hay** **rür** *in* *ha.*
        story   stick   be.three   DIST   DEM.PRN.PROX
        'This is the third story.' [37-1]

Numerals can be reduplicated to denote distributive function, e.g. *jë-jkay* 'each and every, one by one' (see §7.8.1).

The borrowed cardinal numerals often modify a noun in an unmarked relative clause with the copula *vi* carrying singular inflection:

(4.58) a. *Na-r-skul*   *husür*   *dram*   **nga-vi**   **tri.**
              1SG-SBQT-study   follow   year   3SG-COP   three
              'I studied for three years.' [49-28]

         b. *nhayviren*   **nga-vi**   **tu**
              crossbeam   3SG-COP   two
              'two crossbeams' [64-102]

4.11 Limiter *ne*

The limiter *ne* is more commonly used as an adverb (see §9.2.7) but it has also been attested as a modifier of nominals meaning 'only, just' as in the examples in (4.59).

(4.59) a. **Kavman**   **ne**   *nga-ro-gmay*   *aha.*
              government   LIM   3SG-IPFV-come   here
              'Only government [ships] travelled this way.' [101-14]

         b. **Hayug**   **ne**   *drwan*   *arm-am*   *mra-ro-kan*   *bonbon.*
              2SG   LIM   with   father-2SG   2DU-IPFV-eat   together
              'Just you and your father, you two will be eating together.' [21-84]

         c. **Mato**   **ne**   *mata-van*   *vi*   *Lamap.*
              1PL.EXCL   LIM   1PL.EXCL-go   to   L.
              'Only we are going to Lamap.' [232-61]

CHAPTER 5.   POSSESSION AND ALIENABILITY

5.1   Introduction

Ahamb nouns can be classified according to alienability, as alienable or inalienable depending on the semantic properties of the relationship between the possessor and the possessum in possessive constructions. Such classification is common for Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 40-43). In Oceanic languages, inalienable nouns usually denote body parts, kin terms, locative parts and some abstract nouns that form an inherent part of the possessor, while all other nouns are normally classified as alienable. This semantic distinction corresponds to a formal distinction, where inalienable nouns enter into direct possessive constructions (involving a possessive or construct suffix attached to the possessum), while alienable nouns enter into indirect possessive constructions (usually involving a possessive classifier). The above generalisations reflect variation on the levels of the semantic definition of the classes and the form and function of the indirect and direct possessive constructions, including the suffixes and classifiers.

In Ahamb, the correspondence between the semantic distinction by alienability and the formal distinction (direct/indirect possession) is somewhat loose. There is a clearly defined set of inalienable nouns, which allow for suffixed direct possession, while alienable nouns commonly enter into indirect possessive constructions involving two different classifiers – for alimentary and general possession. These two main patterns serve as the "backbone" of the expression of possession in Ahamb.

This chapter describes the classification of Ahamb nouns according to alienability and the possessive constructions, which have been attested in the Ahamb corpus, including details and exceptions to the observed general patterns.

5.2   Inalienable nouns and direct possession

In Ahamb, direct possession can be expressed by a possessive suffix which is attached to the noun stem. Ahamb's nouns that can be inflected using the possessive suffixes are inalienable nouns that refer to body parts and products, kin terms as well as some abstract nouns that are arguably an inalienable part of the possessor (e.g. *nalö-n* 'thought'). Each noun takes one of three paradigms of suffix forms, which are discussed in §5.2.1.

The possessive suffixes are sufficient markers of possession when the possessor is pronominal and in the singular. When the possessor is expressed by a personal pronoun or a noun, a construct suffix is used, which is usually identical to the third-person singular possessive suffix. The use of such construct suffixes is observed in other Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 41) and Malekula languages in particular, e.g. Larevet (Barbour 2016: 148), Neve'ei (Musgrave 2007: 34). In Ahamb, the construct suffix form is also normally the inalienable noun's citation form. Exceptions are listed in §5.2.2 which deals with the construct suffix.

A generalisation of the form of the suffixes is given in (5.1).

(5.1)	Possessive suffixes in Ahamb			
	person/number	suffix	example	free translation
	1SG	-(V)g	naho-g	'my face'
	2SG	-(V)m	naho-m	'your face'
	3SG	-(V)n	naho-n	'his/her face'
	CNSTR	-(V)n	naho-n	'(X's) face'

This possessive suffix paradigm also appears in possessive determiners and pronouns (see §§5.2.2, 5.3.3) and in the preposition *vis-en* 'to', which can have a benefactive function with the suffixes acting as object indexes (see §9.2.5.3).

There is no complete overlap between the semantic category of inalienable nouns and the formal category of direct possession by suffixation. There are many inalienable nouns that cannot take possessive suffixes. For convenience, the two groups of inalienable nouns will be referred to as Type A (those that can take a possessive/construct suffix) and Type B (those that cannot take a suffix) inalienable nouns. There is also evidence that some nouns denoting parts of flora and fauna, have some characteristics of Type A nouns (see §5.2.4).

The inalienable nouns that can be involved in direct possession constructions can also form indirect possessive constructions, just as all Ahamb nouns. When forming indirect possession, Type A nouns appear with the construct suffix (with some exceptions). Indirect possession is discussed in §5.3.

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5.2.1 The possessive suffixes *-(V)g, -(V)m, -(V)n* – Type A inalienable nouns

A generalisation of the form of Ahamb's possessive suffixes was given in (5.1) Ahamb's suffixes are reflexes of POc suffixes **-gu, *-mu* and **-ña* respectively (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 76). These suffixes come in three paradigms listed in Table 5-1. The suffix consonants are invariable between the paradigms.

Table 5-1. Possessive suffix paradigms

	PARADIGM 1	PARADIGM 2	PARADIGM 3
1SG	*-g*	*-ag*	*-ug*
2SG	*-m*	*-am*	*-ëm*
3SG	*-n*	*-en*	*-ën*
construct suffix	*-n*	*-en*	*-ën*

Paradigm 1 (no vowel in the suffix) is by far the most commonly attested one. The stems of all nouns in this paradigm end in a vowel. A list of inalienable nouns which use this paradigm to form direct possession is given in (5.2). In (5.2a) are listed body parts, including some embedded possessives (compounds); in (5.2b) are listed two body product nouns, one of which has a secondary meaning as a kinship term. Kinship terms are listed in (5.2c), while (5.2d) lists nouns that do not belong to any of the above categories, but can be treated as inalienable possessums in an abstract way. The noun *jbo-n* 'oneself' can modify other nouns (see §4.2.3) or can be used predicatively to mean 'by oneself, alone' (see e.g. 8.15c in §8.2.1.2). All nouns in (5.2a-b,d) are common nouns while the nouns in (5.2c) are personal nouns. The stems listed in (5.2) are bound forms that only occur with a possessive or construct suffix.

(5.2)	Inalienable nouns forming direct possession with Paradigm 1 suffixes (*-g, -m, -n*)

    a. *nbe-* 'body'
         nbarë- 'head'
         nasvër barë- 'hair (on head)'
         kankudr barë- 'skull'
         naho- 'face'
         nbango- 'mouth'
         nahur bango- 'lip'
         narvo- 'tooth'
         nabur narvo- 'dental cavity'
         nabungosü- 'nose'
         nbasë- 'cheek'
         navërvër basë- 'beard'

		nbarvisö- 'shoulder'
		nmadrë- 'back'
		narohbbu- 'buttocks'
		nabbë- 'chest'
		narivhe- 'hips'
		nari- 'leg'
		nalönari- 'foot'
		bhavë- 'stomach, belly'
		nahru- 'skin'
		navrë- 'hair, feather (of bird), knot (of tree)'
	b.	*nabbüsë-* 'spit'
		narë- 'faeces; child, offspring'
	c.	*lwo-* 'uncle/nephew'
		swo- 'wife'
		limahswo- 'wife'
	d.	*nalö-* 'thought'
		jbo- 'self'
		nmale- 'one's place, personal space; foot tracks; road'

The only vowel, which has not been attested as a final stem vowel in the nouns in (5.2) is /a/, which appears in the first-person singular and second-person singular suffixes in Paradigm 2.[51] The nouns, which follow Paradigm 2, are listed in (5.3). In terms of form, these nouns tend to have stems that end in a CC sequence (with the exception of *n-* 'mother'). The nouns in (5.3a) are body parts, those in (5.3b) are kinship terms (personal nouns) and in (5.3c) is one abstract noun.

(5.3)	Inalienable nouns forming direct possession with Paradigm 2 suffixes (*-ag, -am, -en*)	
	a.	*namr-* 'eye'
		navrën namre- 'eyelash, eyebrow'
		drarng- 'ear'
		nhalw- 'neck'
		nmalw- 'tongue'
		navr- 'hand'
	b.	*arm-* 'father'
		n- 'mother'
		hayv- 'brother-in-law'
	c.	*nahs-* 'name'

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[51] Alternatively Paradigm 1 and Paradigm 2 could be collapsted into a single paradigm, where the vowel in the suffixes in Paradigm 2 is assigned to the stem with a rule specifying that stem-final /a/ changes to /e/ before /n/.

The suffixes in Paradigm 2 also appear in possessive pronouns (*s-ag, s-am, s-en; nh-ag, nh-am, nh-en*, see §5.3.3) and the preposition *vis-en* 'to' (*vis-ag, vis-am, vis-en*).

Paradigm 3 is the least common one and only five kinship terms (all personal nouns) have been attested to take these suffixes:

(5.4)	Inalienable nouns forming direct possession with Paradigm 3 suffixes (*-ug, -ëm, -ën*)
	pen- 'sister'
	mhaybb- 'grandchild'
	man- 'brother'
	ras- 'younger brother'
	r- 'child'

5.2.2 The construct suffix *-(V)n*

A form of the nouns listed above, featuring a construct suffix which is almost always identical with the third-person singular form (*-(V)n*), is used when the possessor is expressed by a noun phrase, i.e. a personal pronoun (both singular and non-singular) or a noun. Examples are listed in (5.5). In (5.5a-b) the possessor is expressed by a noun phrase with a noun as head. In (5.5c-d) the possessor is encoded by a personal pronoun. The meaning of the phrase in example (5.5d) is identical to the meaning of example (5.5e), where the possessive suffix is used. Both alternatives are commonly attested in the corpus.

(5.5) a. *navr-en*   [***nren   in***]NP
           hand-CNSTR   man   DIST
           'that man's hand' [504-24]

       b. *naho-n*   [***a   tete   ki-li***]NP
           face-CNSTR   PERS   child   DIM.ANA
           'this little child's face' [66-36]

       c. *nari-n   ato*
           leg-CNSTR   3PL
           'their legs' [47-4]

       d. *nahs-en   ahnaw*
           name-CNSTR   1SG
           'my name' [25-2]

e. *nahs-**ag***
    name-1SG
    'my name' [53-1]

5.2.3 Inalienable nouns with special citation forms

The two nouns listed in (5.6) behave differently than most Type A nouns in that their citation form is different from the construct suffix form. When they form direct possessive constructions, these nouns take possessive suffixes. The citation forms (rather than construct suffix forms) are used when these nouns act as possessums in indirect possessive constructions (see 5.17 in §5.3.1).

(5.6)	Inalienable nouns with special citation forms
	(n)male-l 'bed'
	dre 'blood'

Example (5.7a) demonstrates the citation form of *(n)malel* 'bed' used in a non-possessive construction. In (5.7b-c), the suffixed forms (following Paradigm 1) are used in indirect possessive constructions.

(5.7) a. *Na-paj   roh   male**l**.*
           1SG-sleep   be.located   bed
           'I sleep in the bed.' [57-159]

       b. *Nga-ro-prag   male**-g**.*
           3SG-IPFV-make   bed-1SG
           'She's making my bed.' [231-32]

       c. *Nga-ro-por   male**-n**   **ato**.*
           3SG-IPFV-spread   bed-CNSTR   3PL
           'She's making their beds.' [233-16]

(N)malel has a doublet form *(n)malen* 'one's place, personal space; foot tracks; road, path', which is a common noun (listed in 5.2d) and behaves like a typical Type A noun.

(5.8)   a.   *Male-**n**   ha.*
        place-3SG   DEM.PRN.PROX
        'This is his place.' [89-107]

        b.   *male-**n**   nabur   var*
        place-CNSTR   hole   stone
        'the place/space of this cave' [89-40]

        c.   *male-**n**   hayvur   ili*
        track-CNSTR   old.man   ANA
        'the footsteps of the old man' [55-56]

Dre 'blood', appears in its citation form when it is not a possessum as in (5.9a). When it is directly possessed, it can take the singular possessive suffixes or the construct suffix, as in (5.9b-c).

(5.9)   a.   ***Dre***   *nga-ro-tür.*
        blood   3SG-IPFV-drop
        'Blood is dripping.' [10-57]

        b.   ***dre-g***
        blood-1SG
        'my blood' [232-92]

        c.   ***dre-n***   *namer*
        blood-CNSTR   snake
        'the snake's blood' [30-49]

5.2.4   Directly possessed nouns denoting parts of a whole

There is a group of inalienable nouns that refer to parts of a whole, which end in *-n* in their citation form. Such nouns are listed in (5.10) These are most commonly nouns referring to parts of flora and fauna, as in (5.10a). The nouns in (5.10b) refer to parts of a construction or spatial components of entities.[52]

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[52] Such nouns can also be directly possessed in other Malekula languages, e.g. Larevet (Barbour 2016: 142).

(5.10)	Nouns which refer to parts of flora and fauna and display characteristics of Type A nouns	
a.	*bhasvën*	'skin (of coconut)'
	nabbüjën	'tail'
	nabrën	'seed'
	nahren	'root'
	nahrun	'bark'
	nappüsën	'flower'
	narngen	'shell'
	nasün	'juice, water (e.g. of coconut, stew, soup)'
	naven	'fruit'
	navrën	'hair (of animal), feather (of bird), knot (of tree)'
	nbarën	'trunk (of tree), head (of animal)'
	nhajën	'root'
	nmasën	'bud, shoot'
	npajën	'branch'
	nraun	'leaf'
b.	*nasëbon*	'end'
	naburun	'inside' (likely related to *nabur* 'hole')
	namüsün	'middle'
	napon	'top'
	namren	'arrow' (as part of a bow and arrow set, homophonous with *namr-en* 'eye', see 5.3a)

Due to their semantic properties, these nouns, unlike Type A nouns, are not normally combined with possessors in the first or second person, so it is impossible to test whether they are true Type A nouns by verifying whether they can take the possessive suffixes for first-person singular and second-person singular. Thus, there is little ground to treat their final consonant (+ preceding vowels, where applicable) as a suffix. However, with nominal possessors, these nouns form direct possession (just as Type A nouns do with their construct suffixes, see the examples in 5.5, §5.2.2). Some examples are listed in (5.11). In (5.11c), the noun *nabbüjën* appears without a directly following possessor, which may give reason to treat the final *-(ë)n* as a third-person singular possessive suffix. However, the lack of possessor can also be explained with ellipsis.

(5.11) a. *naven   nabrav*
        fruit   breadfruit
        'breadfruit fruit' [252-26]

b. *pajën   nrarës*
   branch   tropical almond
   'a branch of the tropical almond tree' [251-7]

c. *nbarën   naih   ili   drwan   nabbüjën*
   head   fish   ANA   with   tail
   'the head of the fish and its tail' [504-37]

d. *nraun   tëvak*
   leaf   tobacco
   'tobacco leaf' [502-66]

e. *nappüsën   drabuy*
   flower   bush nut tree
   'bush nut tree flower' [40-129]

f. *namisün   naur   lihayhay*
   middle   place jungle
   'in the middle of the jungle' [68-9]

Ahamb speakers demonstrate a dispreference for using these nouns on their own and prefer instead to include them in possessive constructions. In some cases, such constructions are lexicalised to form compound nouns (see 3.47 in §3.6.1).

5.2.5   Inalienable nouns, which do not form direct possession – Type B nouns

Section 5.2.1 listed Ahamb's Type A inalienable nouns, these being inalienable nouns which feature a compulsory suffix and which can form direct possessive constructions. Type A nouns form a subset of all inalienable nouns. This subsection lists attested semantically inalienable nouns which cannot take the possessive/construct suffixes and therefore cannot form suffixed direct possession. These nouns are hereinafter referred to as Type B inalienable nouns.

The dataset in (5.12) lists Type B nouns that are kin terms. All kin terms derived with the prefix *ke-* are also part of this category (see §3.3.3.2 for a list). An interesting case is the noun *sug* 'younger brother', which is semantically identical to the Type A noun *ras-ën*, whose first person singular form is ***ras-ug*** (see §5.2.1) and thus very similar to *sug*. The semantic and

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formal similarities suggest a common origin, but the two nouns belong to different types of inalienable nouns.

(5.12)	Type B inalienable nouns that are kin terms	
	avngong	'parents-in-law (taboo relationship)'
	lalah	'younger sister'
	nahre	'son' (also 'boy')
	nana	'mother'
	napnevër	'wife' (also 'woman')
	narbaruh	'daughter' (also 'girl')
	nren	'husband' (also 'man')
	papa	'maternal uncle'
	sug	'younger brother'
	tata	'father, paternal uncle'
	tavin	'brother-in-law (male ego)'
	tete	'child'
	vavu	'grandparent'
	vavu kakav	'grandmother'
	vavu tötöt	'grandfather'
	veve	'aunt (maternal sister)'
	vilah	'sister-in-law (male ego), daughter-in-law'
	wawa	'older sibling, brother-in-law (female ego)'
	all *ke-* derivations (see §3.3.3.2)	

Type B inalienable nouns which refer to body parts and products are listed in (5.13). It is noteworthy that some of these nouns end in *-n* or *-g*, suggesting a relationship to the suffixes of Type A nouns. This may be a reflection of a historical process, but these nouns cannot form direct possession in contemporary Ahamb. The noun *nabbüsbbüs* 'saliva, snot' has a corresponding noun of Type A – *nabbüsë-n* 'saliva' (see 5.2 in §5.2.1).

(5.13)	Type B inalienable nouns that refer to body parts and products	
	abat	'thumb'
	bri	'anus'
	gaj(gaj)	'finger'
	jagjag	'faeces'
	mis busbus	'urine'
	mis kankanoh	'faeces'
	nabbulbbul	'bone'
	nabbüsbbüs	'saliva, snot'
	namrarür	'tear'
	nanünün	'shadow, spirit'

navidrmag	'heart'
navlag	'sweat'
nhalu	'penis'
nmanug	'sore, wound'
npota	'vagina'
nsüsün	'breast'
nwoy redrredr	'semen'
tabtab	'faeces'

Type B nouns most commonly form indirect possessive constructions with classifiers (see §5.3) although they have been attested in the corpus to form direct possession where the possessor is expressed by a personal pronoun that follows them directly as in (5.14). Such constructions are not common.

(5.14)   *navidrmag*   *hana*
         heart   1SG
         'my heart' [27-36]

5.3   Indirect possession with classifiers

Suffixed direct possession only operates on Type A inalienable nouns. All Ahamb nouns (including Type A nouns) can form possessive constructions that involve a special possessive morpheme known as a classifier. This type of possession is known as indirect possession. When Type A inalienable nouns form indirect possession, they feature the construct suffix.

Complex classifier systems have been documented for a number of Vanuatu languages (Franjieh & Gray 2017; Franjieh, Corbett & Grandison 2020). Ahamb has two classifiers: the general *sa* and the alimentary *(n)ha*. These classifiers can be freestanding, when the possessor is a noun phrase, or can serve as proclitics in possessive determiners and pronouns.

The alimentary classifier *(n)ha* is used with possessums that are alimentary nouns – usually food and drink items (things that are ingestible) and are thus semantically clearly defined. Some examples of alimentary nouns are listed in (5.15). All indirectly possessed nouns that are not alimentary fall into the general category. The alimentary classifier's variants with and without the initial *n* are in free variation.

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	(5.15)	Some examples of alimentary nouns	
		narimaras	'seafood'
		narog	'laplap'
		navüj	'banana'
		nbiskit	'biscuit, cracker'
		nkanin	'food'
		nrais	'rice'

The general classifier is *sa* and is likely a reflex of a reconstructed POc classifier *sa-* (Ross 1988: 185). Classifiers that are reflexes of **sa* are well attested in the languages of Vanuatu (Franjieh & Gray 2017) and Malekula languages in particular (e.g. Healey 2013: 48; Barbour 2016: 151; Moore 2019: 91; Williams 2019: 94)**.** The alimentary classifier *(n)ha* derives from POc food classifier *ka-* (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 77). Many Oceanic languages have separate classifiers for food and drink. In languages like Ahamb where this distinction is not made, it is likely that the two categories have merged (Lichtenberk 2013).

Besides occurring in indirect possessive constructions, the possessive classifiers (freestanding or as part of a determiner) can have benefactive function (see §5.5.2).

5.3.1   The freestanding classifiers *sa* and *(n)ha*

The examples in (5.16) demonstrate the use of the freestanding classifiers in constructions of the type POSSESSUM+CLASSIFIER+POSSESSOR, where the possessor is a noun (i.e. not pronominal), including the interrogative personal noun *si* 'who', as in (5.16b,d). The possessums in (5.16a-d) are alienable nouns, while in (5.16e-f) they are inalienable nouns. In (5.16f), the possessum is a Type A inalienable noun and therefore features the construct suffix.

(5.16)   a.   *nwog*   ***sa***   *Taso*
               canoe   CLF.GNR   T.
               'Taso's canoe' [44-87]

         b.   *Nari ujuj*   ***sa***   *si*   *ha?*
               mobile.phone   CLF.GNR   who   DEM.PRN.PROX
               'Whose mobile phone is this?' [232-108]

c. *sën   narog **nha**   Sema*
   piece laplap CLF.ALIM S.
   'Sema's piece of laplap' [232-105]

d. *Kanin **ha**   **si** ki-prag-ni   iha?*
   food   CLF.ALIM who 2SG.IRR-make-OBJ PROX
   'Whose food is it this one that you are making?' [232-109]

e. *a   tete   **sa**   narmaj   ngail*
   PERS child CLF.GNR evil.spirit NSG
   'the child of the evil spirits' [8-65]

f. *naho-**n**   **sa**   tete   iha*
   face-CNSTR CLF.GNR child PROX
   'this child's face' [232-90]

The freestanding classifiers and the following possessor nominal form a single prosodic unit. The Ahamb community prefers the classifiers spelled separately from the nouns. When the possessor starts with *a-*, the resulting two /a/ segments result a singleton /a/ (see §2.5.3.1).

The two Type A inalienable nouns listed as exceptions in (5.6) (in §5.2.3), *malel* 'bed'*,* and *dre* 'blood' have been attested in their citation form in indirect possessive constructions, rather than with the construct suffix, as in (5.17a-b). Such forms are not common, however, and all examples of *malel* and *dre* with indirect possession are elicited. The example in (5.17c) illustrates a similar case with the word *naver* 'hand', which appears instead of the expected form with the construct suffix, *navr-en* 'hand' (see 5.3). The form *naver* has only been attested in religious contexts.

(5.17) a. ***malel*** *sa*   *Sema*
       bed   CLF.GNR S.
       'Sema's bed' [233-14]

     b. ***dre***   *sa*   *Taso*
       blood CLF.GNR T.
       'Taso's blood' [233-78]

     c. *lön   **naver** sa   Atua*
       LOCP hand   CLF.GNR God
       'in the hands of God' [98-303]

5.3.2 Possessive determiners

When the possessor in an indirect possessive construction is pronominal, possessive determiners are used. The form of possessive determiners is transparent – the freestanding classifiers are prefixed/procliticised to the corresponding personal pronoun for the non-singular or, for the singular, the possessive suffixes of Paradigm 2 (*-ag/-am/-en*, see §5.2.1). All possessive determiner forms are listed in Tables 5-2 and 5-3.

Table 5-2. General possessive determiners

	SG		DU	PL
1	*s-ag*	INCL	*s-draru*	*s-drato*
		EXCL	*s-maru*	*s-mato*
2	*s-am*		*sa-mru*	*sa-mto*
3	*s-en*		*s-aru*	*s-ato*

Table 5-3. Alimentary possessive determiners

	SG		DU	PL
1	*(n)h-ag*	INCL	*(n)ha-draru*	*(n)ha-drato*
		EXCL	*(n)ha-maru*	*(n)ha-mato*
2	*(n)h-am*		*(n)ha-mru*	*(n)ha-mto*
3	*(n)h-en*		*(n)h-aru*	*(n)h-ato*

The form of the possessive determiners shows that the prefixed classifiers can surface with or without /a/. The following morphophonological rule applies for possessive determiners formed with *sa-*:

(5.18) a:Ø/_(C)V
      e.g. *sa + <u>ma</u>ru > smaru*, *sa + <u>dra</u>ru > sdraru, sa + <u>a</u>to > sato, sa + -<u>en</u> > sen*

For the alimentary classifier, the underlying form is *nha* with the following morphophonological constraint:

(5.19) a:Ø/_V
      e.g. *nha + <u>a</u>to> nhato, nha + -<u>en</u> > nhen*

The loss of /a/ from the classifier before pronouns starting with /a/ is an automatic process that disallows a sequence of two identical vowels (see §2.5.3.1). This rule also explains the loss of /a/ in the freestanding form *sa*, described in §5.3.1, e.g. *sa Atua* [satua].

A few examples that demonstrate the use of possessive determiners are listed in (5.20). Of the general indirect possessive constructions in (5.20), the possessum in (5.20a) is an alienable noun. In (5.20b) the possessum is a Type A inalienable noun with a construct suffix, while in (5.20c) it is a Type A-like noun that refers to parts of flora (see §5.2.4). The phrase in example (5.20b) is identical in meaning with the direct possession examples in (5.5d-e) (see §5.2.2). In (5.20d) the possessum is a Type B inalienable noun. Examples (5.20e-f) demonstrate the use of alimentary possessive determiners.

(5.20) a. *nwog* ***s-mato***
            canoe   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL
            'our canoe' [76-46]

        b. *nahs-**en***   ***s-ag***
            name-CNSTR   POSS.GNR-1SG
            'my name' [27-15]

        c. *nahren*   ***s-ato***
            root   POSS.GNR-3PL
            'their roots' [251-18]

        d. *a*   *tete*   ***sa-mru***
            PERS   child   POSS.GNR-2DU
            'your child' [47-103]

        e. *Sipal*   *Atua*   *rben*   *kanin*   ***nha-mato.***
            thanks   God   because.of   food   POSS.ALIM-1PL.EXCL
            'Thank you, God, for our food.' [201-13]

        f. *dram*   ***h-en***
            yam   POSS.ALIM-3SG
            'his yam' [97-103]

5.3.3 Possessive pronouns

Possessive pronouns are less commonly used in Ahamb than possessive determiners and usually occur in specific syntactic constructions. They are formed by an initial *i-* attached to

the general possessive determiners. No alimentary possessive pronouns have been attested. Only singular and first-person plural exclusive forms of possessive pronouns have been attested in the corpus. Possessive pronouns are mostly found in the speech of older people.

Possessive pronouns can have three different functions:

- to form indirect possession with inverted word order (i.e. when the possessive pronoun precedes the possessum). The possessum in such constructions tends to be an abstract noun:

  (5.21) ***is-ag***   *maurin*
        POSS.PRN-1SG   life
        'my life' [3-13]

- when the possessor has predicative function, as in the non-verbal relative clause in (5.22):

  (5.22) *narmaj* *ili*   [*aven* ***is-mato***]
        devil   ANA   REL   POSS.PRN-1PL.EXCL
        'this devil that is ours' [51-55]

- when the possessive pronoun forms a noun phrase on its own because the possessum is clear from the context as in (5.23). This function can also be expressed by possessive determiners as in (5.23d-e).

  (5.23) a. ***Is-ag***   *nga-jëb*   *ai.*
             POSS.PRN-1SG   3SG-finish   here
             'Mine finishes here.' [57-398]

          b. *Nga-r-kar*   ***is-en.***
             3SG-SBQT-tell   POSS.PRN-3SG
             'He tells his [story].' [91-4]

          c. *Nga-va-jar* *nari-n*   *aven*   *vi*   *lön*   ***is-en***,
             3SG-GO-put   leg-3SG   INDF.ART   go.to   LOCP   POSS.PRN-3SG

             aven   *vi*   *lön*   ***is-ag.***
             INDF.ART   go.to   LOCP   POSS.PRN-1SG
             'He put one of his legs in his [canoe] and one [his other leg] in mine.' [55-38]

          d. *Nga-vi*   ***s-ag.***
             3SG-COP   POSS.GNR-1SG
             'It is mine.' [27-113]

e. ***S-ag***   *mhar.*
     POSS.GNR-1SG   above
     'Mine is above/up there.' [9-67]

The origin of the initial *i-* is unclear. In Ahamb, *i-* is a third-person singular irrealis subject index (see §8.2), so the form of the possessive pronouns may be a reanalysis of an earlier predicative function. In other Malekula languages, such as Neverver, the prefix *i-* can be a person marker (Barbour 2012: 165); an alternative explanation may be that *i-* reflects a diachronic grammatical category in Ahamb, which only survives in this restricted environment. In any case, *i-* is likely a leftover from a feature that was more common in the past. In other words, these possessive pronoun forms may be archaic, which is in line with them not being commonly used.

5.3.4 Fluidity

Some nouns can fluctuate between the alimentary and general subclasses, according to the context, namely the purpose, for which a potential food or drink item is to be used. This variation is reflected in the choice of classifier. This phenomenon is known in the literature as "overlap" or "fluidity" (Lichtenberk 2010: 273-276; 2013: 205-207). Three example pairs are listed in (5.24). In the example pair (5.24a-b), the choice of classifier depends on the purpose for which the water will be used (bathing or drinking). In the example pairs in (5.24c-d), the choice of classifier primarily depends on semantic differences. In (5.24c), *brav* refers to a breadfruit tree, which cannot be eaten, while *nabrav*[53] in (5.24d) refers to the breadfruit fruit. Additionally, the example in (5.24d) refers to a fruit, which in this particular context is designated for the addressee to eat. Similarly, in example (5.24e), the choice of the general classifier means that the question is not about who will eat the taro, but rather who the owner of the taro is (the taro may be owned for a purpose different than eating, e.g. for sale). In the context of example (5.24f), the taro has been designated for Taso to eat.

(5.24)   a.   *nwoy*   *püdrpüdr*   ***s-am***
         water   be.hot   POSS.GNR-2SG
         'your hot water (for bathing)' [238-1]

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[53] *na*-accretion is optional with this word and its presence or absence is not relevant to the possessive construction.

b. *nwoy   püdrpüdr   **nh**-am*
   water   be.hot   POSS.ALIM-2SG
   'your hot water (for drinking)' [238-2]

c. *brav   **s**-am*
   breadfruit   POSS.GNR-2SG
   'your breadfruit (tree)' [45-30]

d. *nabrav   **nh**-am*
   breadfruit   POSS.ALIM-2SG
   'your breadfruit' (fruit designated for the addressee to eat) [238-3]

e. *Nabbiag   **sa**   si   ha?*
   taro   CLF.GNR   who   DEM.PRN.PROX
   'Whose taro is this?' [232-103]
   = 'Who is the owner of this taro plant/root?'
   ≠ 'Who is going to eat this taro?'

f. *nabbiag   **ha**   Taso*
   taro   CLF.ALIM   T.
   'Taso's taro' (for him to eat) [232-110]

5.4   Summary of canonical possession

Table 5-4 provides a summary of the canonical strategies for expressing possession in Ahamb based on the descriptions in §§5.2, 5.3 (PM = possessum; PR = possessor).

There are other ways to form possessive or possessive-like constructions in Ahamb that involve different strategies or variations on the constructions listed above. The next section looks at such strategies.

5.5   Other possessive or possessive-like constructions

The following subsections describe possessive and possessive-like constructions that are different from canonical possession. Associative relationships can be expressed with the verb-like preposition *hën*.[54] The possessive morphology can have benefactive function. Benefactive relationships can also be expressed with the help of the prepositions *hën*, *vis-en*

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[54] *Hën* is similar in form but distinct from the third-person singular alimentary possessive determiner *hen*.

and *mhay.* This function is demonstrated in the discussions of the respective prepositions in §9.2.5.

Table 5-4. Summary of canonical possession

	PM is:	PR is pronominal		PR is nominal
		SG	NSG	
Direct possession	suffixed inalienable noun (Type A)	PM-POSSESSIVE.SUFFIX *nahs-**ag*** 'my name' PM-CNSTR+PERS.PRN[55] *nahs-**en ahnaw*** 'my name' *naho-**n mato*** 'our face'	---	PM-CNSTR+PR *nahs-**en** naur ën* 'the name of that place'
Indirect possession	all nouns (suffixed inalienable nouns marked by construct suffix[56])	PM+POSS.DET GENERAL DETERMINER: *nahs-en **sag*** 'my name' *nbe-n **smato*** 'our bodies' *tete **sag*** 'my child' *tete **sdraru*** 'our child' *nalikalim **sag*** 'my house *nalikalim **smato*** 'our house' ALIMENTARY DETERMINER: *kanin **nhag*** 'my food *kanin **nhamato*** 'our food'		PM+CLASSIFIER+PR GENERAL CLASSIFIER: *naho-n **sa** tete iha* 'this child's face' *tete **sa** napnevër iha* 'this woman's child' *nalikalim **sa** nren iha* 'this man's house' ALIMENTARY CLASSIFIER: *kanin **nha** nren iha* 'this man's food'

5.5.1 Prepositional possession for associative relationships

The verb-like preposition *hën* can be used to denote associative relationships that resemble possession. In such constructions *hën* follows the possessum and precedes the possessor. Some examples are listed in (5.25). The possessor in such constructions is usually nominal as in examples (5.25a-d). Example (5.25e) is an uncommon case of a possessor expressed by a personal pronoun. In the third-person singular, a pronominal possessor can be expressed by the object pro-index *-i* (see §9.2.5.2), as in (5.25f-g). There is a tendency for this construction to be used with borrowings.

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[55] Also, albeit rarely, with Type B inalienable nouns (§5.2.5).

[56] The nouns *malel* 'bed', *dre* 'blood' and *naver* 'hand' are exceptions, see (5.17) in §5.3.1.

(5.25) a. *matmatuin* **hën** *nanünün s-en*
        power   GNRP spirit   POSS.GNR-3SG
        'The power of his spirit.' [27-40]

    b. *nappüshare* **hën** *nalikalim*
        staircase   GNRP house
        'the house's staircase' [30-32]

    c. *sekreteri* **hën** *presbiteri*
        secretary GNRP presbytery
        'secretary of the presbytery' [36-74]

    d. *taem* **hën** *proses* **hën** *Transformesen*
        time GNRP process GNRP transformation
        'the time of the process of [the religious ceremony of] Transformation' [23-43]

    e. *prais* **hën** *ato*
        price GNRP 3PL
        'their price' [107-36]

    f. *najëngavin* **hën-i**
        opening   GNRP-OBJ
        'its opening.' [38-45]

    g. *nasëlvarin* **hën-i**
        story   GNRP-OBJ
        'the story of it' [57-432]

5.5.2 Benefactive function of possessive morphology

In addition to expressing possessive relations, the possessive determiners and freestanding classifiers can have a benefactive function:

(5.26) a. *Mata-r-va-gas* **s-en.**
        1PL.EXCL-SBQT-GO-work POSS.GNR-3SG
        'We went to work for him.' [101-5]

    b. *Na-ro-gas* **sa** *kavman.*
        1SG-IPFV-work POSS.GNR government
        'I was working for the government.' [49-40]

c. *Nga-vuy   prahor   **sa**-mru.*
    3SG-good   morning   POSS.GNR-2DU
    'Good morning to you two.' [201-155]

d. *Mra-r-kuk   **h**-ag.*
    2DU-SBQT-cook   POSS.ALIM-1SG
    'You two cook for me.' [9-91]

e. ***Ha***   *napnevër,   ngel-ha.*
    POSS.ALIM   woman   NSG-PROX
    'These [turtles] here are for the women [to eat].' [58-66]

CHAPTER 6.   NOUN PHRASE STRUCTURE

6.1   Introduction

This chapter describes the structure of noun phrases (NPs) in Ahamb. The types of nominals that can serve as heads of a noun phrase were outlined in Chapter 3. This chapter looks at the different modifiers (see Chapters 4 and 5) and markers that can appear with these nominals. Many Malekula languages display a relatively fixed order of elements in NPs (e.g. Neverver (Barbour 2012: 114) and Avava (Crowley 2006a: 64)). NPs in Ahamb are most consistently characterised by the nominal head occurring initially, followed by modifiers. Among the modifiers themselves, there is a high degree of flexibility in ordering. There is a general tendency for grammatical modifiers to occur in the order of Nominal Head + Quantifier + Demonstrative. Possessive constructions and relative clauses can be positioned immediately after the nominal head, or after other grammatical modifiers. Some elements of the noun phrase can be repeated, for example there is a pattern of pronominal head repetition, which takes the form Complex Pronominal + Demonstrative + Simple Pronominal. There is also a pattern of demonstrative repetition, where a demonstrative can occur near the nominal head, and again at the end of the noun phrase following intervening modifiers.

In the sections that follow, each of the four types of nominal heads with its modifiers is illustrated. The emphasis is on describing the dominant patterns of modification, as well as illustrating the flexibility that has been observed within the order of NP elements in the Ahamb corpus.

6.2   Noun phrases with pronominal heads

Personal pronouns can form noun phrases on their own. They can also take a number of modifiers, including quantifiers, relative clauses, demonstratives and the indefinite article *aven*. This section presents an account of what modifiers can co-occur with personal pronouns. Personal pronouns do not commonly occur with two or more modifiers. This section describes the attested combinations, including NPs with complex personal pronouns as heads.

When a personal pronoun is followed by *parne*, it has the meaning of 'all of…, everyone':

(6.1) *mto   parne*
2PL   every
'all of you' [71-512]

The indefinite quantifier *drës* after a pronoun means 'one of…', as in (6.2a-b). Less commonly the indefinite article *aven* can modify a personal pronoun to the same effect, as in (6.2c).

(6.2) a. *draru   drës*
1DU.INCL   INDF
'one of the two of us' [21-40]

b. *ato   drës*
3PL   INDF
'one of them' [71-328]

c. *maru   aven*
1DU.EXCL   INDF.ART
'one of the two of us' [112-43]

Demonstratives can modify independent pronouns, as shown in the examples in (6.3). Most commonly demonstratives modify non-singular pronouns, and the demonstratives appear in their complex form with the non-singular marker *ngel* (see §4.4), as in (6.3a-b). The example in (6.3c) demonstrates a less common modification of a singular personal pronoun by a simple demonstrative.

(6.3) a. *mato   ngel-ha*
1PL.EXCL   NSG-PROX
'we here' [57-427]

b. *maru   ngel-ën*
1DU.EXCL   NSG-DIST
'the two of us (that I just talked about)' [91-32]

c. *hayug   ha*
2SG   PROX
'you here' [98-341]

Pronouns can also be modified with relative clauses normally introduced by the relativiser *aven* or its variants *ngel aven* (non-singular) and *man bi aven* (see §4.6). Four examples are listed in (6.4). Examples (6.4a-b) illustrate relative clauses as the sole modifier of personal pronouns, while examples (6.4c-d) show that demonstratives follow the relative clause when they co-occur with relative clauses as modifiers of personal pronouns.

(6.4) a. *hayug* [*aven* *ka-ruru* *lön* *maurin* *s-am*]
           2SG   REL   2SG-return LOCP life   POSS.GNR-2SG
           'you, who come back to your life…' [23-20]

       b. *mato*   [*man bi aven* *mata-r-kemkem*   *hën*
           1PL.EXCL   REL   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-be.happy   in.order.to

           mata-r-paj   *gasin*   *s-am*]
           1PL.EXCL-SBQT-carry   work   POSS.GNR-2SG
           'we, who are happy to perform your work' [98-365]

       c. *mato*   [*ngel aven*   *mata-tov*   *roh*]   *iha*
           1PL.EXCL   NSG-REL   1PL.EXCL-stay   be.located   PROX
           'we here, who are present' [57-403]

       d. *mato*   [*ngel aven*   *mata-rür*]   *ngel-ha*
           1PL.EXCL   NSG-REL   1PL.EXCL-be.three   NSG-PROX
           'the three of us here' [6-38]

The complex non-singular pronominal forms *(a)lëngel* and *(a)tëngel* (see §3.2.1.2) are normally modified by simple demonstratives, rather than the non-singular complex forms with *ngel*. This is likely because *ngel* is already integrated in the stems of the complex pronouns. Examples (6.5a-b) show these forms modified by simple demonstratives. The demonstrative *ili* has been observed to merge with the pronoun and trigger haplology, as in example (6.5c), where *tëngel-ili* > *tëngeli*. This example illustrates an expression for encoding denizens of a place, with the toponym directly following complex pronoun with fused demonstrative. Example (6.5d) demonstrates that complex demonstratives with the diminutive *ki* (see §4,5) can also serve as modifiers of pronominals.

(6.5) a. *lëngel*   *ha*
           3DU   PROX
           'these two [people] here' [71-731]

b. *Tëngel   ili   ata-kar…*
   3PL   ANA   3PL-say
   'They said…' [30-178]

c. *Tëngel-i   Habbur   ta-ro-prag   nah.*
   3PL-ANA   Habbur   3PL-IPFV-make   mask
   'The people of Habbur are making a mask.' [52-29]

d. *tëngel   ki-li*
   3PL   DIM-DEM
   'these few ones' [53-9]

The phonological process in (6.5c) above suggests a tight juncture between the pronoun and the demonstrative. This observation is supported by the fact that when *(a)lëngel* and *(a)tëngel* appear together with their corresponding basic independent pronouns (see §3.2.1.1), the modifying demonstrative appears between the two pronouns, as in (6.6) below. This pattern of pronominal head repetition is well attested in the corpus, where the complex pronominal head is followed by a demonstrative and then a simple pronominal head. Any other modifiers follow the second pronoun, as with the relative clause in (6.6d) or the indefinite quantifier in (6.6e).

(6.6) a. *Nga-rës **alëngel ili   aru**.*
         3SG-see **3DU   ANA 3DU**
         'He saw the two of them.' [79-22]

     b. *Nga-kar-e   vis-en   **atëngel ili   ato**   …*
         3SG-tell-OBJ to-CNSTR   **3PL   ANA 3PL**
         'He told them…' [103-22]

     c. *nahs-en   **atëngel ën   ato***
         name-CNSTR   **3PL   DIST 3PL**
         'their names' [10-52]

     d. ***alëngel ya   aru*** [*aven   ra-gam*]
         3DU   DEM 3DU   REL   3DU-run
         'these two, who ran' [88-59]

     e. ***tëngel ha   ato   drës***
         3PL   PROX 3PL   INDF
         'one of these [men] here' [231-9]

More examples of personal pronouns with more than one modifier are given in (6.7). In (6.7a) the quantifier *parne* occurs before a relative clause, which is followed by the non-singular modifier *ngail*. Example (6.7b) demonstrates the non-singular marker *ngail* followed by a demonstrative, while in (6.7c) it is followed by the non-singular form of the indefinite article. The phrases in (6.7a,c) show the repetition of information pertaining to quantity.

(6.7) a. *atëngel* *ato* *parne* [*aven* *ta-rahrah*] *ngail*
           3PL   3PL   every   REL   3PL-get.married NSG
           'all the couples that are to be married' [57-234]

       b. *mato*   *ngail*   *ha*
           1PL.EXCL   NSG   PROX
           '(all of) us here' [22.1-44]

       c. *drato*   *ngail*   *ngel aven*
           1PL.INCL   NSG   NSG-INDF.ART
           'some of us' [86-65]

6.3   Noun phrases with common noun heads

Common nouns, being the largest class of nouns in Ahamb, function as the heads of the most commonly attested NPs. Common nouns also allow the largest number of nominal modifiers. Most of the examples of modifiers discussed in Chapter 4 featured common nouns as heads. Therefore, this subsection will focus on the order in which these modifiers tend to occur when two or more of them modify a common noun within the same phrase.

All modifiers of common nouns follow the head. The order in which the modifiers appear after the head noun is flexible. One of the most striking features of the attested orders is that commonly occurring modifiers such as quantifiers, possessors, demonstratives and relative clauses, allow for different ordering possibilities. In some cases, morphological heaviness (the quantity of words/morphemes within each modifier) might play a role, where heavier modifiers may appear later in the phrase. This principle can be superseded by semantic criteria. For example, relative clauses, which tend to be morphologically heavy, may precede much lighter modifiers such as demonstratives when they are restrictive (i.e. semantically more important). Examples are given later in this subsection.

What follows is a discussion of the different combinatorial possibilities which informed the conclusion that noun phrase modifiers display flexible word order in Ahamb. Inflected numerals that appear on their own are treated as unmarked relative clauses.

Examples where more than two modifiers co-occur are uncommon. The two examples in (6.8) however have three modifiers. In example (6.8a), a complex head (see §3.6.4) is followed by a diminutive, a bare-stem numeral stative verb and a possessor in this order. In (6.8b), demonstrative repetition is displayed, with two complex demonstratives (see §4.5) and an intervening relative clause.

(6.8) a. *narëh   nwog   ki   jkay   s-ag*
     small.one canoe DIM   be.one POSS.GNR-1SG
     'a small canoe of mine' [31-37]

     b. *nhay   ngel-ha   [aven   ta-melkiki]   ki-ha*
       wood   NSG-PROX   REL   3PL-be.small   DIM-PROX
       'these sticks here that are small' [86-22]

The diminutive *ki*, when occurring on its own (i.e. it is not as part of a complex modifier), usually follows the head noun immediately, as in (6.9).

(6.9) *lön   nabong   ki   ne*
     LOCP   time   DIM   LIM
     'at just this time' [57-373]

Quantifiers, relative clauses and possessors present a high degree of flexibility in their order in the corpus. These modifiers are functionally similar in that they can add an increased degree of definiteness to the head noun. In some cases, the order in which these modifiers appear may have a semantic or functional significance, whereas in others it appears to be random. The available evidence is presented below.

The following pairs of modifiers display flexible positioning in the noun phrase:

- demonstrative <> relative clause (examples in 6.10)
- possessor <> relative clause (examples in 6.11)
- possessor <> non-singular *ngail* (examples in 6.12)
- possessor <> quantifier (examples in 6.13)
- relative clause <> quantifier (examples in 6.14)

The following paragraphs discuss, exemplify and, where possible, offer an explanation for the flexibility that is displayed in the ordering of these modifiers.

The examples in (6.10) illustrate that relative clauses can precede demonstratives (6.10a-b) or follow them (6.10c-d). Semantically, when relative clauses are closer to the head, they appear to be restrictive, whereas they tend to be non-restrictive when they follow the demonstrative. In (6.10d), the repetition of the demonstrative, both before and after the relative clause, is treated as emphatic.

(6.10) a. *nrab* [*aven Atua pësah-ni vis-en drato*] *iha*
image REL God give-OBJ to-CNSTR 1PL.INCL PROX
'this image that God gave us' [84-27]

b. *nren* [*ngel aven ata-rëm*] *iha*
man NSG-REL 3PL-be.five PROX
'these five men' [2-6]

c. *nraun hay ili* [*aven nga-drëm gmay*]
leaf tree ANA REL 3SG-fall come
'these leaves (of a tree), that fell down' [44-15]

d. *naben iha* [*aven na-subb roh lön*] *iha*
mat PROX REL 1SG-sit be.located LOCP PROX
'this mat that I am sitting on' [27-116]

The dominant pattern is for relative clauses to follow possessors (including when the relative clause is unmarked), as in (6.11a-b). However, in example (6.11c) the order is reversed. The reason for the reversed order can perhaps be attributed to the fact that the phrase encoding the possessor is heavier (both longer and morphosyntactically more complex) than the relative clause.

(6.11) a. *nhay s-am* [*aven ka-r-kar-e kar konapos*]
wooden post POSS.GNR-2SG REL 2SG-SBQT-say-OBJ COMP *konapos*
'your wooden posts that are called *konapos* [corner post]' [86-6]

b. *nakerasënin s-ag* [*nga-ru*]
brother POSS.GNR-1SG 3SG-two
'my two brothers.' [69-36]

c. *nasara* [*aven* *nga-leb*]   [*sa*   *man* *Maliabor* *ngail*]
clan   REL   3SG-be.big   CLF.GNR   man   M.   NSG
'the big clan of the Maliabor people' [25-39]

Possessors predominantly precede the non-singular marker *ngail,* as in (6.12a-c). However, the reverse word order has also been attested, as in (6.12d).

(6.12) a. *nakemanënin*   *s-en*   *ngail*
brother   POSS.GNR-3SG   NSG
'his brothers' [44-50]

b. *nakemarwenin*   [*sa*   *Taso*] *ngail*
uncle   CLF.GNR   T.   NSG
'Taso's uncles' [44-109]

c. *kanin*   *ha-mato*   *ngail*
food   POSS.ALIM-1PL.EXCL   NSG
'our foodstuffs' [108-66]

d. *nari*   *ngail*   *sa-mto*
thing   NSG   POSS.GNR-2DU
'your things' [71-282]

Possessors predominantly follow the quantifier *parne* 'all, every' as in (6.13a). *Parne* is commonly attested following a plural possessor, but in those cases, it modifies the possessor rather than the head noun (6.13b). It is possible for *parne* to modify the head noun and follow the possessor in direct possessive constructions as in (6.13c).

(6.13) a. *nari*   *ngel parne*   *s-am*
thing   NSG-QNT   POSS.GNR-2SG
'all the things of yours' [23-64]

b. *kaykayin*   *s-mato*   *parne*
call   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL   every
'the call of all of us' [98-384]

c. *navr-ën*   *hana*   *parne*
hair-CNSTR   1SG   every
'all my hair(s)' [47-72]

The quantifiers *parne* and *drës* normally precede relative clauses, as shown in (6.14a-g). In (6.14h), the numeral is treated as an unmarked relative clause and *parne* follows it. The reason for this less common order might be that in this example *parne* is used in the sense of 'both' (see §4.9), which is why the numeral is specified before *parne*.

(6.14) a. *nahre   parne*   [*aven   nga-vipen*]
            boy   every   REL   3SG-be.small
            'all the boys that are small' [57-313]

        b. *gasin   parne*   [*ngel aven   na-ro-prag-ni*]
            work   every   NSG-REL   1SG-IPFV-make-OBJ
            'all the different projects (work) I am working on' [38-24]

        c. *nren   drës*   [*aven   ta-jang-ni   nog*]
            man   INDF   REL   3PL-raise-OBJ   already
            'a man ['s dead body] that they have put up [on a wooden platform to rotten]'
            [90-22]

        d. *nhaw   drës*   [*aven   nga-gan*]
            rope   INDF   REL   3SG-be.like
            'a rope which is like this' [7-22]

        e. *Në-sba-rës   nari   drës*   [*aven   nga-gan   rohjer*].
            1SG-NEG-see   thing   INDF   REL   3SG-be.like   yet
            'I have not seen anything like this before.' [57-370]

        f. *Drëjba-visen   nren   drës*   [*aven   nga-tëga   nhayworwor*].
            1PL.INCL.NEG-have   man   INDF   REL   3SG-hold   ship's wheel
            'We don't have any ship captains [here in our community].'
            (Lit.: 'We don't have any men who hold ship's wheels.') [1-87]

        g. *Ka-prag   nari   ngel drës*   [*aven   ka-prag-ni   lön*
            2SG-make   thing   NSG-INDF   REL   2SG-make-OBJ   LOCP

            nabong   man   gamuj].
            day   LOC   past
            'You make some things that you made in the past (i.e. pagan customs not
            accepted by Christianity).' [23-29]

        h. *ntrak   nga-ru   parne*
            truck   3SG-be.two   every
            'both trucks' [108-88]

Demonstratives precede possessors:

(6.15) a. *sëlvarin   iha   s-ag*
        story   PROX   POSS.GNR-1SG
        'this story of mine' [55-1]

     b. *narbag   in   ha-drato*
        wild.yam   DIST POSS.ALIM-1PL.INCL
        'this wild yam of ours' [10-10]

     c. *narmaj   in   [sa   man Malön ngail]*
        evil.spirit DIST CLF.GNR man M.   NSG
        'the evil spirit of the people of Malön' [51-41]

The non-singular marker *ngail* normally precedes a relative clause as in example (6.16). Such examples are rare because in such cases, the complex relativiser *ngel aven* is normally used (see §4.6.6).

(6.16) *sabbin ngail [aven hayvur s-drato   ngail*
       sin   NSG   REL   old.man POSS.GNR-1PL.INCL NSG

       ta-prag-ni   nog]
       3PL-make-OBJ   already
       'the sins that our old men (ancestors) have already committed' [57-34]

Demonstratives precede quantifiers as in examples (6.17a-b) but follow the non-singular marker *ngail* as in (6.17c). The latter example is rare because the same meaning is more commonly expressed by a complex demonstrative involving *ngel* (see §4.5).

(6.17) a. *maru   ngel-ën   parne*
        coconut NSG-DIST every
        'all these coconuts' [30-116]

     b. *pep tütüis   iha   drës*
        notebook PROX INDF
        'these (few) books' [30-116]

     c. *pep   ngail   ili*
        book NSG   ANA
        'these books' [55-143]

While demonstratives and quantifiers can be repeated in the noun phrase, relative clauses can co-occur to express different types of information about the head noun, as in example (6.18) where an unmarked attributive relative clause precedes a marked number relative clause

(6.18) *tank*   [*nga-leb*]   [*aven*   *jkay*]
         water.tank   3SG-be.big   REL   be.one
         'one big water tank' [3-112]

The indefinite article *aven* tends to appear at the end of a common noun phrase. The examples in (6.19) illustrate combinations of *aven* being preceded by a possessor (6.19a), relative clause (6.19b), and a quantifier (6.19c).

(6.19) a. *nhayvur*   *s-mato*   *aven*
             old.man   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL   INDF.ART
             'an old man of ours [in our family]' [3-60]

        b. *nadru*   [*aven*   *nga-drag*]   *aven*
             earthquake   REL   3SG-be.strong   INDF.ART
             'one earthquake that was strong' [3-103]

        c. *Ka-ro-drëngdrëng*   *nwog*   *drës*   *aven!*
             2SG-IPFV-look.for   canoe   INDF   INDF.ART
             'Keep looking for a canoe!' [56-41]

6.4   Noun phrases with personal noun heads

A personal noun can be marked by the personal noun marker *a*, which normally precedes the head. The range of modifiers that can modify personal nouns is similar to that for common nouns. However, since personal nouns are a small class and occur less often, not all possibilities have been attested. Personal names are not commonly modified by, for example, demonstratives, quantifiers or articles, since names are inherently definite and individuated.

Personal nouns followed by more than two modifiers are uncommon. Example (6.20) shows a sentence in which a personal noun is followed by a demonstrative, indefinite quantifier and a possessor in this order:

(6.20) *a*   *tete*   *iha*   *drës*   *s-ag*
         PERS   child   PROX   INDF   POSS.GNR-1SG
         'this one child of mine' [34-224]

Adjectives or bare-stem stative verbs follow the noun directly. Examples (6.21a-b) below demonstrate the use of bare-stem numerals following compound personal nouns. In (6.21b), the personal name *Petro* forms a complex head with *avngong* to specify which taboo relatives are referred to, since their names cannot be mentioned (see §1.3.1). The examples in (6.21c-d) illustrate that adjectives/bare-stem stative verbs precede an indefinite quantifier.

(6.21) a. *man   Tahiti   jkay*
           man   Tahiti   be.one
           'One man from Tahiti.' [6-55]

      b. *avngong   a   Petro   ru*
           taboo.parent-in-law   PERS   Petro   be.two
           '[My] taboo parents-in-law, the parents of Petro.' [71-411]

      c. *a   tata   kiki   s-ag*
           PERS   uncle   be.small   POSS.GNR-1SG
           'my paternal uncle [who is younger than my father]' [69-23]

      d. *Atua   mnaj   drës   mi   sba-gan   hayug.*
           God   other   INDF   again   NEG-be.like   2SG
           'There is no other God like you.' [27-5]

Possessors have been observed preceding the indefinite article *aven* (6.22a), the quantifier *parne* (6.22b) or an unmarked relative clause (6.22c).

(6.22) a. *Nga-han tete   s-draru   aven.*
           3SG-eat   child   POSS.GNR-1PL.INCL   INDF.ART
           'He ate one of our children.' [53-71]

      b. *papa   s-en   ngel parne*
           uncle   POSS.GNR-3SG   NSG-QNT
           'all of his uncles' [44-103]

      c. *a   tete   s-en   nga-jkenene*
           PERS   child   POSS.GNR-3SG   3SG-be.one
           'her one child' [1-94]

Possessors can precede and follow the non-singular marker *ngail*. The word order does not appear to be semantically determined. Three examples are given in (6.23).

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(6.23) a. *tete   s-mato   ngail*
        child   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL   NSG
        'our children' [27-91]

    b. *tata   ngail   s-mato*
        father   NSG   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL
        'our fathers' [112-11]

    c. *a   lipah   ngail   s-aru*
        PERS   dog   NSG   POSS.GNR-3DU
        'their dogs.' [24-19]

Possessors have only been attested following demonstratives in personal NPs:

(6.24) a. *wawa   ngel-ha   s-en*
        brother   NSG-PROX   POSS.GNR-3SG
        'his brothers' [30-113]

    b. *nana   in   s-mato*
        mother   DIST   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL
        'this mother of ours' [90-36]

As with common nouns, when demonstratives and relative clauses modify a personal noun together, there is flexibility in their relative position as the examples in (6.25) illustrate. When the relative clause appears closer to the head, it is restrictive as in (6.25a), otherwise it is non-restrictive as in (6.25b).

(6.25) a. *a   tete   [aven   nga-rohroh]   in*
        PERS   child   REL   3SG-be.present   DIST
        'the child that is here' [65-35]

    b. *a   vavu tötöt   in   [aven   nga-roh   matu   Lamap]*
        PERS   grandfather   DIST   REL   3SG-stay   be.strong   Lamap
        'that grandfather, who lives in Lamap' [52-38]

6.5   Noun phrases with local noun heads

Local nouns can take a limited number of modifiers. Besides the local noun markers *a* and *man*, which precede the head (see §3.5), examples of local nouns followed by demonstratives or possessors have been attested as illustrated in the examples in (6.26). The demonstrative in

(6.26a) appears to have emphatic function, while the one in (6.26b) is anaphoric. The lack of *n(V)*-accretion and the preposition *lön* in examples (6.26c-d) means that the two nouns are local nouns rather than their common noun counterparts (see §3.3.1).

(6.26) a. *kiaha   iha*
            today   PROX
            'this day, today' [85-44]

     b. *Nga-rohroh   a   ras   in.*
            3SG-live   LOC   sea   DIST
            'He lives at that place by the sea' [47-31]

     c. *Dra-r-van   vi   im   s-am.*
            1DU.INCL-SBQT-go   go.to   village POSS.GNR-2SG
            'We go to your village.' [34-83]

     d. *Na-rohroh   likalim   sa   Kalmase.*
            1SG-be.located   home   CLF.GNR   K.
            'I am in Kalmase's home.' [108-187]

Nog 'already', which normally acts as an adverb (see §9.2.7), is attested to modify some temporal local nouns as in (6.27). More examples were given and discussed in §3.5.2.

(6.27) *nari   man   sürway   nog*
        thing   TEMP   distant.past already
        'things of the distant past' [6-57]

The phrases with locative meaning formed with the help of local nouns modifying the common noun *naur* 'place, time' (see §3.5.4) can further be modified as common noun phrases, as in examples (6.28) where *naur* and the local noun *im* 'village', preceded by the local noun marker *a*, form a complex head, which is in turn modified by an adjective and the non-singular marker (6.28a) or a demonstrative and a possessor (6.28b).

(6.28) a. [*naur   a   im*]   *mnaj   ngail*
            place   LOC   village   different   NSG
            'different villages' [106-6]

     b. [*naur   a   im*]   *in   s-am*
            place   LOC   village   DIST   POSS.GNR-2SG
            'your village [the one that you mentioned earlier]' [9-79]

6.6   Coordination of noun phrases

Both conjunctive and disjunctive coordination of noun phrases has been observed in Ahamb.

There are two strategies of conjunctive coordination of noun phrases – listing and overt coordination with the coordinator *drwan*. Listing of noun phrases can be marked by means of prosody. Example (6.29) demonstrates the listing of four noun phrases, all fish names. Figure 6-1 shows the waveforms and pitch contour for the utterance in (6.29) demonstrating pauses between the different nouns and distinct prominence (F0 peak) for each noun. The pauses can vary in length. The pause between the first two noun phrases is longer, likely because it marks the speaker's pausing to think. A large part of the pause between the second and third noun phrase is filled with a clear nasal airflow in preparation for the noun phrase which starts with /n/.

(6.29)   *nrag,*   *naih narov,*   *nmavur,*   *nhansüs*
      large rabbitfish   rabbitfish   emperor fish   goat fish
      'large rabbitfish, rabbitfish, emperor fish, goat fish' [10-27]
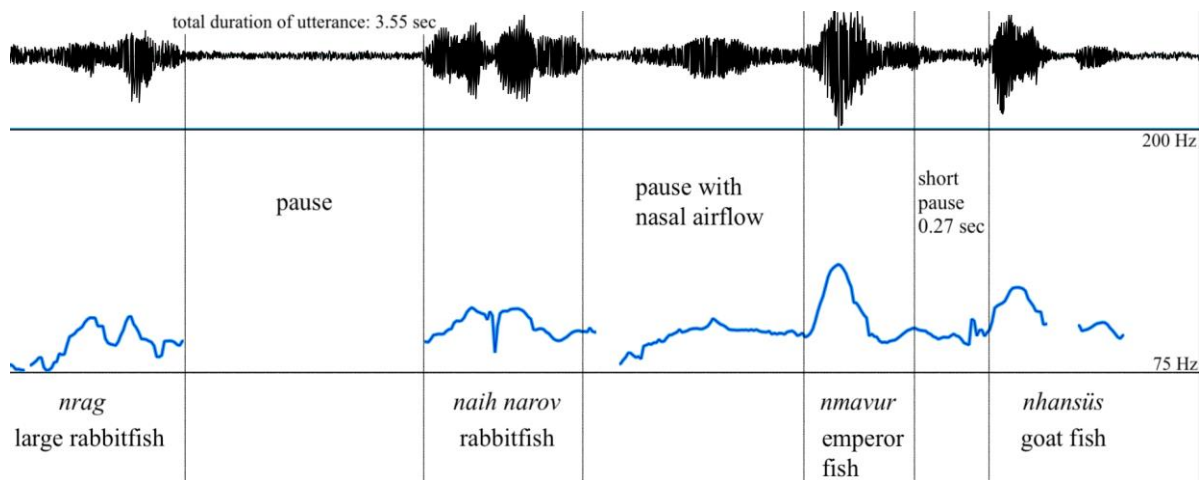
Figure 6-1. Waveform and pitch contour of an example of listing of NPs marked with pauses [10-27]

In example (6.30), however, two noun phrases are listed without any pause in between as demonstrated by the spectrogram and sound wave in Figure 6-2. The pitch contour for this utterance, however, shows a drop in pitch in the first half of the second noun phrase, which can be interpreted as a marker of listing.

(6.30) [A   nana   s-en]   [a   tata   s-en]
PERS mother POSS.GNR-3SG PERS father POSS.GNR-3SG

ara-ro-kar-e   *vis-en*   *ange…*
3D-IPFV-say-OBJ   to-CNSTR   3SG
'His mother and his father told him…' [66-15]
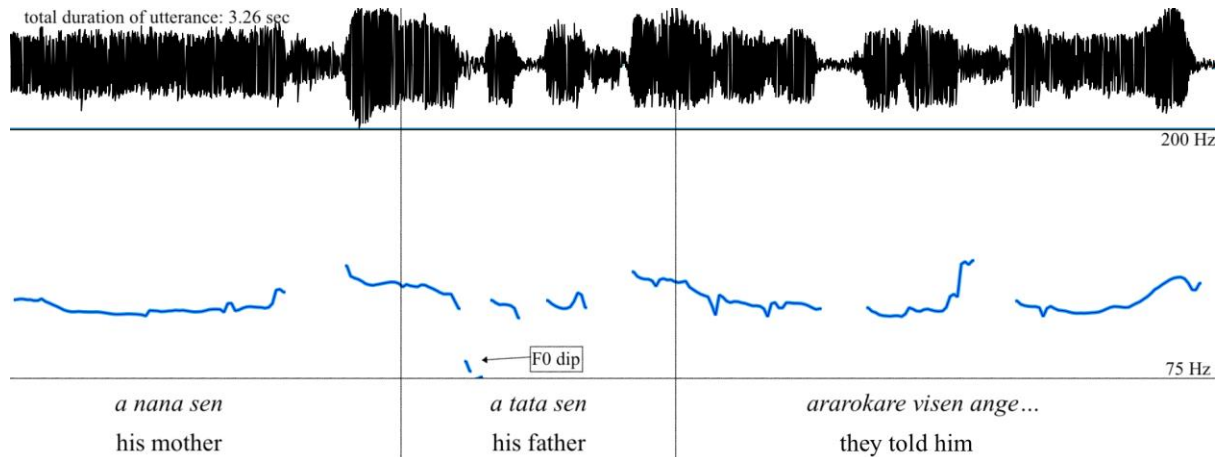
Figure 6-2. Waveform and pitch contour of listing of NPs without pauses [66-15]

The overt coordinator *drwan*, which can also function as comitative preposition (see §9.2.5.2), is illustrated in the examples in (6.31). Example (6.31a) shows conventional overt coordination of two noun phrases. In (6.31b), one of the noun phrases is expressed only by the possessive suffix attached to the possessive classifier. Example (6.31c) demonstrates the use of *drwan* as a preposition and coordinator in the same sentence.

(6.31) a. *npep tütüs   sa   Beki   **drwan**   a   Nil Tom*
            notebook   CLF.GNR Beki   and   PERS   Nil Tom
            'notebooks for Beki and Nil Tom' [55-3]

        b. *nasëlvarin   s-ag   **drwan**   a   hayvur*
            story   POSS.GNR-1SG   and   PERS   old.man
            'the story of the old man and me' [58-139]

        c. *Nga-rohroh   drwan   a   tata   s-en   **drwan***
            3SG-live   with   PERS   father   POSS.GNR-3SG   and

            a   nana   s-en.
            PERS   mother   POSS.GNR-3SG
            'He lives with his father and mother.' [47-23]

Disjunctive coordination of NPs is normally marked by the indigenous coordinator *je* or the borrowed *o*. Example (6.32a), shows coordination of three noun phrases where the first two are coordinated with *je*, whereas the coordination between the second and third phrase is unmarked. Such unmarked disjunctive coordination only exists in such cases, where an overt coordinator already appears in the phrase. Example (6.32b) demonstrates disjunctive coordination with *o*.

(6.32) a. *nren **je**   napnevër,   narbaruh*
             man   or   woman   girl
             'Men, women or girls.' [27-48]

        b. *Nbatuv nga-tahtah   lön   nmar   **o**   nvar*
             spear   3SG-be.stuck   LOCP large.spherical.coral   or rock
             'The spear is stuck in a coral or a rock.' [70-59]

CHAPTER 7.   VERB CLASSES

7.1   Introduction

Verbs in Ahamb constitute an open class. This chapter provides an outline of the different subclasses of verbs in Ahamb, with a primary distinction being made between intransitive (see §7.2) and transitive stems (see §7.3). Transitivity is generally not morphologically marked, although there are some exceptions (see §7.5). The chapter also provides a brief presentation of derivational processes, which are mostly used to derive intransitive verbs from transitive verbs. Reduplication is commonly attested in Ahamb verbs, especially in intransitive verbs, both as a derivational and an inflectional device. Reduplication is discussed in the last subsection.

A prototypical verb in Ahamb denotes an action or a state and it can act as the head of the verb complex within a clause. Inside the verb complex, a verb is typically preceded by prefixed subject indexes. Other preverbal (mostly prefixed) modifiers expressing TAM categories, along with negation, may occur before the verb stem. Transitive verb stems may be followed by a suffixed object pro-index. The morphology of the verb complex is detailed in Chapter 8.

7.2   Intransitive verbs

Intransitive verbs in Ahamb take a single argument – the grammatical subject, which can be expressed with a noun phrase and/or a subject index. They can be further subcategorised into active and stative verbs.

7.2.1   Active intransitive verbs

Some active intransitive verbs are listed in (7.1). Although semantic subclasses can be identified, these intransitive verbs behave uniformly in terms of their modifiers. Set (7.1a) illustrates intransitive motion verbs with volitional agents as their sole argument. Set (7.1b) presents a list of intransitive posture verbs, and set (7.1c) presents intransitive actions, undertaken by a human participant. Set (7.1d) illustrates intransitive processes that have a clear endpoint, while (7.1e) illustrates intransitive processes that are ongoing. Intransitive

verbs borrowed from Bislama are listed in (7.1f). Some of the verbs listed below feature reduplication, which is discussed in detail in §7.8.

(7.1)		Some active intransitive verbs	
	a.	*gam*	'run, walk, move (in a direction), ride (on a vehicle)'
		van	'go'
		vanvan	'walk, to roam around'
		gmay	'come'
		mrah	'fly'
		këklah	'crawl'
		traj	'slide'
		jumrah	'stand up'
	b.	*rwag*	'stand'
		(subb)subb	'sit'
		(roh)roh	'stay, be located, live (in a place)'
		paj	'lie'
		tëbrah	'hang'
	c.	*kavër*	'shut one's eyes'
		kaj	'eat, bite' (cf. transitive counterpart *haj*)
		kan	'eat' (cf. transitive counterpart *han*)
		kër	'dig, harvest (yams)' (cf. transitive counterpart *hër*)
		luh	'joke'
		mah	'light up a stone oven'
		men	'laugh'
		(pan)panün	'cook, roast' (cf. transitive counterpart *pan*)
		ven	'carry fruit'
	d.	*kubah*	'wake up'
		paj	'sleep'
		jëb	'end'
		mir	'light up, be lit'
		per	'pass (through)'
		pijkor	'finish'
		hav	'finish'
		pajmari	'nap, take a siesta'
		porah	'appear; be born'
		lu	'vomit'
		jab	'get lost, lose one's way'
	e.	*maur*	'live, be alive'
		sah	'boil'
	f.	*bus*	'become bush/let the jungle take over (a place)'
		lisën	'listen'
		jenj	'change'
		ple	'play'
		pre	'pray'
		skul	'attend school'
		lötu / letu	'worship' (from Samoan)

7.2.2 Stative intransitive verbs

The other subtype of intransitive verbs comprises stative verbs. Stative verbs denote states and qualities, these being situations where there is no change or action involved. In Ahamb, stative verbs constitute a large subclass and inflect in the same ways as active verbs. A range of physical properties are denoted by stative verbs. These are listed in (7.2) in antonymic pairs where these exist.

(7.2)

Some stative intransitive verbs	
bbut	'be blunt, not sharp'
kan	'be sharp'
drödr	'be dry'
(mes)mes	'be dry'
müjmüj	'be wet'
leb/lab/lug	'be big'
(mel)kiki	'be small'
mam	'be ripe'
mer	'be unripe, green (for fruit)'
ppër[57]	'be cold'
süsmel	'be cold'
pang	'be hot, lit up, on fire'
püdrpüdr	'be hot'
vuy	'be good'
sabb	'be bad'
drag	'be strong, hard, difficult'
(mat)matu	'be strong'
hayhay	'be strong'
(më)mdraw	'be soft'
yalyal	'be high, be tall'
(bë)bleg	'be short'
yohyoh	'be short'
lugus	'be many'
vës	'be few'
kavkav	'be full'
ppur	'be full'
bubus	'be empty'
nav	'be enough'
nöbb	'be deep'
gog	'be overgrown'
burbur	'be silent'
mhav	'be tired'
ngos	'be lazy'

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[57] In special constructions, the verb *ppër* can also take two arguments to refer to sensations of the type 'I am cold' (§9.2.1.2).

dasdas	'be smooth'
draldral	'be round'
hajhaj	'be entangled'
bbutbbutat	'be entangled'
kajkaj	'be sweet'

Colours in Ahamb are intransitive stative verbs, which inflect as other verbs.

(7.3) Stative verbs denoting colours

gëglen	'be colourful'
bungbung	'be purple'
lütlüt	'be yellow'
masmas	'be brown'
mermer / mörmör	'be black'
pangpang	'be red'
(redr)redr	'be white'
waswas	'be light (for colour)' (e.g. *pangpang waswas* 'be pink')
werwer	'be grey (for hair)'
yangyang	'be orange (colour)'
këkjen	'be green, blue'

In Ahamb, cardinal numerals function as stative verbs, except for *nrenhavuy* 'twenty', which is a noun. Numerals one to five are listed in (7.4). See §4.10 for further details and examples of cardinal numerals.

(7.4) Stative verbs denoting cardinal numerals from 1 to 5

jkay / jkenene	'be one'
ru	'be two'
rür	'be three'
vaj	'be four'
rëm	'be five'

7.2.3 Active~stative verb pairs

Some intransitive verbs can have either an active or a stative meaning. Such verbs are listed in (7.5). In most cases, the semantic relationship between the two verbs in each pair is apparent. In the case the stative verb *kan* 'be sharp', it describes the state of a tool (e.g. a knife) being able to "eat" at a substance that is being cut.

(7.5)	Intransitive verbs with both active and stative meaning		
	stem	active meaning	stative meaning
	leb	'grow, become big'	'be big'
	(mes)mes	'dry up'	'be dry'
	kan	'eat'	'be sharp'
	drag	'talk angrily'	'be strong, hard, difficult'
	pang	'burn, boil'	'be lit up, burning, on fire'

The semantic role of the active verbs' subject can be either an agent (e.g. *drag* 'talk angrily', *kan* 'eat') or an undergoer (e.g. *pang* 'dy up', *mes(mes)* 'burn, boil'). The single argument (subject) of the stative verbs is an undergoer (e.g. *pang* 'to be lit up, burning, on fire', *mes(mes)* 'be dry'). The examples in (7.6) illustrate the use of the verbs *mesmes, leb* and *kan*. In (7.6a,c,e) the verbs appear with their stative meaning. When they function as active verbs, these verbs often feature aspectual markers such as the imperfective *ro-* and the motion marker *va-* as in (7.6b,d,f).

(7.6) a. *Drata-rës   naur   ha   nga-r-**mesmes**.*
       1PL.INCL-see   place   PROX   3SG-SBQT-be.dry
       'We see that the place is dry.' [37.2-38]

    b. *Nwoy   ili   nga-ro-**mesmes**.*
       water   ANA   3SG-IPFV-dry.up
       'The water is drying up.' [51-61]

    c. *Rbaruh   ili   nga-**leb**.*
       girl   ANA   3SG-be.big
       'The girl is big.' [10-17]

    d. *Nras   nga-ro-**leb**.*
       sea   3SG-IPFV-grow
       'The tide is coming up.' [31-113]
       (lit. 'The sea is becoming big (growing).')

    e. *Geru   nga-r-**kan**.*
       seashell   3SG-SBQT-be.sharp
       'The seashell is sharp.' [17-60]

    f. *Ta-r-va-**kan**   urën.*
       3PL-SBQT-GO-eat   there
       'They will go eat over there.' [10-17]

7.3   Transitive Verbs

Transitive verbs are defined as requiring two arguments – prototypically an agent (a grammatical subject with the A-function) and an undergoer-like argument (a grammatical object with the O-function).

Morphologically, transitive verb stems are distinguished from intransitive verbs in Ahamb in that transitive verbs may be followed by an object index. In Ahamb, an object can either be expressed by a nominal phrase (a noun or personal pronoun), or it can be indexed by an object index, as shown in (7.7). In other words, postverbal NP objects cannot co-occur with object indexes.[58] In this sense Ahamb's object indexes are more correctly termed *object pro-indexes*, adopting Haspelmath's (2013: 220) terminology.

(7.7)

		Nominal object
Transitive verb	+	Pronominal object (personal pronoun)
		Pronominal object (object pro-index)

The examples in (7.8) illustrate the strategies presented in (7.7), with the object encoded by a noun in (7.8a), by a personal pronoun in (7.8b) and by an object pro-index in (7.8c). Object pro-indexes are much more commonly used to encode pronominal objects than personal pronouns.

(7.8)   a.   *Jesti   nga-rav   **nabut***.
            J.   3SG-take   boat
            'Jesti took a boat.' [79-58]

        b.   *Dra-r-palong   **ange***.
            1PL.INCL-SBQT-want   3SG
            'We will want it.' [98-197]

        c.   *Mata-bël-**ni**   urya.*
            1PL.EXCL-throw-OBJ   there
            'We throw it over there.' [79-41]

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[58] Object indexes are used when a nominal object is fronted (e.g. example 8.43e in §8.6 and 7.22d in §7.4), is the external head of a relative clause (§§4.6.2, 4.6.3) or is mentioned in a previous clause.

An object pro-index can encode a third-person object in all numbers. In (7.9) the object pro-index encodes an object in the plural.

(7.9) *Nga-sar   nga-vi   twenti   o   ten,   va-tov-**ni**.*
       3SG-carry   3SG-COP   twenty   or   ten   GO-put-OBJ
       'It [the canoe] carries 20 or 10 [people] and goes to leave them [at their destination].' [42-116]

Object pro-indexes can also be attached to verb-like prepositions (see §9.2.5.2).

Two verbs, *pus* 'ask' and *tëga* 'hold', constitute exceptions in that they cannot take object pro-indexes and their pronominal objects are obligatorily expressed using a personal pronoun.

Object pro-indexes are normally suffixed and can take the following forms: *-ni, -i, -e, -o*. However, when a member of a small subclass of adverbs appears between the verb and the object pro-index, the object pro-index always takes the form *ni* (spelled separately) (see §8.6 for detailed discussion), suggesting that *(-)ni* is the basic form of the index.

The form of the suffixed object pro-index cannot be definitively predicted based on the form or meaning of the verb stem. However, some patterns have been observed. The following subsections discuss the different forms of the object pro-index and list verbs that they occur with. The verbs in the datasets below are listed with the object pro-index for the sake of demonstration of the use of the object pro-index and any phonological processes that they trigger. The citation forms of Ahamb verbs do not feature the object pro-index.

7.3.1   The object pro-index *-ni*

The object pro-index *-ni* is the most common form of the index. Some transitive verbs that take *-ni* are listed in (7.10). Stems ending in a variety of consonants can take *-ni* (7.10a).[59] Verbs ending in a vowel or /j/ always take *-ni* (7.10b). Verbs ending in /n/ are assumed to take an underlying object suffix *-ni*, which surfaces as *-i* (7.10c).[60] Given that identical consonants over a morpheme boundary are normally degeminated (see §2.5.3.4), it is reasonable to hypothesise that here, an underlying sequence of [n-ni] is reduced to [n-i].

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[59] Including the verb-like preposition *perjag* 'close to' (§9.2.5.2).

[60] Including the verb-like prepositions *drwan* 'with', *hën* 'of, to' and *dran* 'away' (see §9.2.5.2).

Borrowings tend to take *-ni*, regardless of their form (7.10d), supporting the hypothesis that *-ni* is the basic form of the index.

(7.10)	Transitive verbs that take the object pro-index *-ni*		
	a.	*belbel-ni*	'omit (doing something), miss (an opportunity)'
		bël-ni	'throw'
		dram-ni	'let go'
		drardrar-ni	'shake vigorously, move hastily'
		drar-ni	'put'
		gurgur-ni	'prepare'
		jah-ni	'pull'
		jang-ni	'put'
		jar-ni	'spear'
		karkoj-ni	'speak honestly'
		kubah-ni	'shake, wake someone up'
		leleng-ni	'take good care of sth/so'
		löv-ni	'pour'
		mrah-ni	'fear, be afraid of sth'
		ngot-ni	'not want sth'
		nov-ni	'think about (sth)'
		palong-ni	'want, smell, hear, sense'
		parëg-ni	'make laplap out of'
		pebëng-ni	'forget'
		(pë)pëh-ni	'count, distribute, read'
		pësah-ni	'give'
		por-ni	'spread'
		ppure-ni	'spit sth out'
		ppur-ni	'buy, sell, trade'
		ppus-ni	'put coconut milk on sth'
		prag-ni	'do, make, work'
		rav-ni	'take'
		sadr-ni	'beat, win over, be better than'
		soh-ni	'reach'
		tah-ni	'tie'
		tëb-ni	'divert'
		(tob)tobat-ni	'start'
		tov-ni	'put'
		udr-ni	'join (two things together)'
		uj-ni	'discuss, talk about'
		varus-ni	'paddle (a canoe)'
		vaur-ni	'pour'
		velvel-ni	'explain'
	b.	*garu-ni*	'round, walk around (sth)'
		kaykay-ni	'call'
		kay-ni	'sing'
		korsay-ni	'do sth in what way' (interrogative meaning)
		matmatu-ni	'strengthen'

	ppure-ni	'spit out'
	ruru-ni	'return'
	tëba-ni	'place sth in upright position'
	ve-ni	'weave'
c.	*bbën-i*	'eliminate, kill' (coverb)
	gwan-i	'tighten'
	han-i	'eat'
	jubran-i	'join'
	ken-i	'take'
	lëhsan-i	'roll'
	mtan-i	'hide from someone'
	mün-i	'drink'
	pan-i	'bake, roast'
	sun-i	'fill'
	tagwan-i	'hold tight'
	tëtwen-i	'show, illustrate'
	vësan-i/pësan-i	'teach'
d.	*sev-ni*	'shave'
	kuk-ni	'cook'
	pent-ni	'paint'
	salëm-ni	'sell'
	mak-ni	'mark'
	baptais-ni	'baptise'
	kompos-ni	'compose'

The examples in (7.11) demonstrate the use of the transitive verb *prag* 'do' with a nominal object (7.11a) and the object pro-index *-ni* (7.11b). Similarly, examples (7.11c-d) illustrate the use of the verb *han* 'eat' with a nominal object and with the object pro-index *-ni*, which surfaces as *-i* due to degemination of /nn/.

(7.11) a. *Mata-**prag** **gasin** nga-lugus.*
    1PL.EXCL-do   work   3SG-be.many
    'We perform a lot of tasks.' [27-10]

   b. *Mato   mata-**prag**-**ni.***
    1PL.EXCL   1PL.EXCL-do-OBJ
    'We do it.' [27-10]

   c. *Na-ro-**han**   **naih**.*
    1SG-IPFV-eat   fish
    'I am eating fish.' [201-115]

d. *Mata-ro-**han-ni**.*   (underlying form)
    *Mata-ro-**han-i**.*   (after degemination)
    1PL.EXCL-IPFV-eat-OBJ
    'We are eating it.' [41-30]

The examples in (7.12) demonstrate the use of the object pro-index with the verbal prepositions *drwan* 'with' and *hën* 'of, to' (see §9.2.5.2), after degemination.

(7.12) a. *Mata-gas*   **drwan-ni.**   (underlying form)
            Mata-gas   **drwan-i.**   (after degemination)
            1PL.EXCL-work   with-OBJ
            'We worked with him.' [13-12]

        b. *nasëlvarin*   **hën-ni**   (underlying form)
            nasëlvarin   **hën-i**   (after degemination)
            story   of-OBJ
            'the story of/about it' [59-18]

7.3.2   The object pro-index *-i*

The object pro-index *-i* follows verb stems that end in a consonant sequence of CC. In such cases, the index's basic form *-ni* would produce a CCC cluster, which is phonotactically disfavoured. The small number of stems attested in the corpus are listed in (7.13a). There are also a number of verb stems that end in a single consonant and take the suffix *-i*, listed in (7.13b). The verbs in (7.13c) undergo optional syncope of the schwa vowel in the root (see §2.5.3.5), while those in (7.13d) undergo optional schwa metathesis (see §2.5.4).

(7.13)	Transitive verbs that take the object pro-index *-i*	
a.	*bangs-i*	'tie'
	bbüns-i	'watch'
	mrahs-i	'forbid'
	rangs-i	'mourn, cry because of s.o.'
b.	*bur-i*	'break'
	bët-i	'bend'
	husür-i	'follow'
	hurhur-i	'clean'
	jav-i	'cut'
	jëb-i	'shoot'
	juv-i	'grate (banana, coconut, tubers), plane (wood)'
	karur-i	'announce'
	krov-i	'cross, break through' (coverb)
	kuj-i	'break off' (coverb)

	kuv-i	'take away, carry away' (coverb)
	lum-i	'plant'
	paj-i	'carry'
	rëb-i	'carry'
	rëng-i	'put'
	sël-i	'separate a banana fruit from its bundle, share'
	sur-i	'burn'
	tëh-i	'hit, ring (a bell)'
	uv-i	'blow onto sth'
	vëj-i	'trim, prune, cut all branches of a plant'
	vër-i	'buy'
	vhar-i	'skin'
	vras-i	'walk on sth, stand on sth'
	vrëj-i	'peel (e.g. cassava, mandarin, grapefruit)'
c.	*hër-i / hr-i*	'dig'
	jalëv-i / jalv-i	'shoot'
	pës-i / ps-i	'tie up'
	rës-i / rs-i	'see'
	sër-i / sr-i	'give an account of, tell (a story)'
	tëh-i / th-i	'hit'
	vën-i / vn-i	'shoot'
d.	*jrëv-i / jërv-i*	'push/force sth through'
	plëv-i / pëlv-i	'pull'
	brëj-i / bërj-i	'stick'

Example (7.14a) illustrates the use of the verb *bbüns* 'watch' with the *-i* index. The example in (7.15b) demonstrates syncope of the stem schwa with the addition of *i-* to the verb *rës* 'to see'.

(7.15) a. *Mata-ro-**bbüns-i.***
            1PL.EXCL-IPFV-watch-OBJ
            'We were watching it.' [89-72]

       b. *Mta-**rs-i.***
            2PL-see-OBJ
            'You see it.' [15.1-79]

7.3.3   The object pro-index *-e*

The Ahamb verbs which take the object pro-index *-e* are listed in (7.16).[61] The three verb stems listed in (7.16a) have the stem vowel /a/. All other verbs that take *-e* feature a stem vowel /o/, which changes to /u/ under suffixation. All attested verbs with /o/ in the stem that take the *-e* undego this vowel change when the object pro-index is added.[62] These verbs are listed in (7.16b).

(7.16)	Transitive verbs that take the object pro-index *-e*	
a.	*brah-e*	'reach'
	kar-e	'say'
	sar-e	'carry'
b.	*drom ~ drum-e*	'swallow'
	gol ~ gul-e	'carry (sth heavy)'
	hoj ~ huj-e	'chase'
	jol ~ jul-e	'peel (e.g. sweet potato)'
	jong ~ jung-e	'send'
	kob ~ kub-e	'stone sth (throw stones to release something, e.g. fruit from a tree)'
	por(por) ~ pur(pur)-e[63]	'break' (coverb)
	voj ~ vuj-e	'nail sth, hammer down (a nail)'
	yaholv ~ yahulv-e	'pour'

The following examples demonstrate the use of the verb *drom* 'swallow' with and without an object index with the associated stem vowel variation. More examples of verbs with *-e* can be found in §§8.6, 11.2.2.

(7.17) a.   *Charles   nga-**drom**   var.*
        C.   3SG-swallow   stone
        'Charles swallowed a stone.' [234-72]

    b.   *Naih   in   nga-**drum-e**.*
        fish   DIST   3SG-swallow-OBJ
        'That fish swallowed it.' [79-18]

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[61] The verb-like prepositions *rov* 'close to', *drov* 'close to' and *gor* 'over' feature the same vowel change with the object pro-index *-e* (§9.2.5.2).

[62] An additional 19 transitive verbs with /o/ in the stem that take object pro-indexes other than *-e* have been attested in the corpus.

[63] *(Por)por* is in fact a coverb, see §11.2.2. Also, note that the prototypical verb *por* 'straighten, spread' takes *-ni*.

7.3.4 The object pro-index *-o*

Only two verbs take the object pro-index *-o*. The stem final VC sequence of *vnah* is found in other verb stems that take *-ni, -i,* or *-e*, while a homophone of *sadr* 'sew', which means 'beat, win over, be better than', takes the *-ni* index. The fact that *vnah* derived from PNCV **vanako* (Clark 2009) may be relevant to the synchronic form of the subject pro-index for this example (John Lynch, pers.comm.).

(7.18)	Transitive verbs that take the object pro-index *-o*
	vnah-o 'steal'
	sadr-o 'sew' (cf. *sadr* 'beat, win over, be better than' which takes *-ni*)

The examples in (7.19) illustrate the use of *vnah* 'steal' with and without an object pro-index.

(7.19) a. *Be   ka-ro-**vnah**   **nari**   sa   nren mnaj   jab!*
      PROH1 2SG-IPFV-steal thing CLF.GNR man different PROH2
      'Do not steal from other people!' [66-17]

    b. *Man Fiji ta-**vnah-o**   nog.*
      man F. 3PL-steal-OBJ already
      'The Fijians had already stolen it.' [33-70]

7.4 Ambitransitive verbs

Some Ahamb verbs can be ambitransitive, meaning that the same form can serve as either a transitive or an intransitive verb depending on the context. In example (7.20a), the verb *mün* 'drink' functions as an intransitive verb whereas in example (7.20b) it is a transitive verb with an object expressed by a noun phrase.

(7.20) a. *Ata-**mün**   ate-va-ro-sev.*
      3PL-drink 3PL.SEC-GO-IPFV-dance
      'They drank [alcohol] and they went on to dance.' [1-36]

    b. *Rohbay drata-r-**mün**   namelhudr.*
      in.future 1PL.INCL-SBQT-drink kava
      'We are going to drink kava.' [201-54]

Some common ambitransitive verbs are listed in (7.21). The verb stems for each pair are identical. The verbs in (7.21a) are A-type (actor verbs), where the transitive subject coincides with the intransitive subject. The verbs in (7.21b) are U-type (undergoer verbs), where the

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transitive object coincides with the intransitive subject.[64] U-type verbs are also discussed in
§7.4, 7.7.

(7.21)	Ambitransitive verbs		
	a.	stem	transitive	intransitive
		(ji)ji	'shell out sth (e.g. copra)'	'shell out copra'
		kuk (Bisl.)	'cook sth'	'cook'
		lum	'plant sth (e.g. yam)'	'plant (as a general activity, e.g. during yam planting season)'
		men	'laugh at, make fun of'	'laugh'
		mün	'drink sth'	'drink; drown'
		ngot	'not want sth'	'be unwilling'
		parëg	'cook (laplap); make laplap out of sth'	'make laplap'
		siu	'catch sth with a string'	'be fishing using a string'
		varus	'paddle sth (e.g. a canoe)'	'paddle'
	b.	*bonbon*	'join together'	'be together'
		gurgur	'prepare sth'	'be prepared/ready'
		jang	'put a person's dead body on top of a rack (as per pre-Christian funeral practices)'	'lay on top of a flat surface'
		jëngav	'open'	'be open'
		jrëv / jërv	'push sth through an opening'	'pass through (an opening)'
		matmatu	'strengthen'	'be strong'
		ruru	'return sth'	'return, come back'
		tov	'put, place (sth in a place)'	'be physically (in a place)'

The A-verb *parëg* has particularly versatile syntactic behaviour. It refers to an activity which
is a central part of everyday life on Ahamb – the labour-intensive process of making *narog*
'laplap', a traditional meal that has grated tuber (cassava, yam, taro, sweet potato) or plantain
as a base and is garnished with coconut milk and a filling. The filling is normally a source of
protein such as meat, chicken or seafood, but other flavourings such as pumpkin can be used
too. The meal is baked in an earth oven. The verb *parëg* is thus very commonly used.

Example (7.22a) demonstrates its use as an intransitive verb referring to the action of cooking
laplap without any elaboration. In (7.22b), the verb is transitive and the object specifies the
type of laplap[65] that is made. Alternatively, the object can specify the ingredient of the filling

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[64] This follows the Oceanic terminology of Ross (2004: 504-507). Other authors (e.g. Dixon 1988: 204) use the
term O-verb ("object verb") instead of U-verb.

[65] Different types of laplap can be specified as compounds of different nouns where either only the filling or
base ingredient is mentioned or both (with the base ingredient mentioned first and the filling second), e.g. *narog*

(7.22c) or the base (7.22d). In (7.22d), the object is fronted and it is marked with an object pro-index on the verb.

(7.22) a. *Ra-ro-parëg.*
3DU-IPFV-make.laplap
'They are making laplap.' [39-32]

b. *Na-parëg   narog bamkin.*
1SG-make.laplap   laplap.pumpkin
'I am making laplap with pumpkin (as filling).' [41-12]

c. *Lovuk   drata-r-parëg   naher.*
tomorrow   1PL.INCL-SBQT-make.laplap   octopus
'Tomorrow we will make laplap with octopus (as filling).' [76-12]

d. *Narbag   in   ha-drato   drata-r-parëg-ni.*
Wild.yam   DIST   POSS.ALIM-1PL.INCL   1PL.INCL-SBQT-make.laplap-OBJ
'That wild yam of ours, we are going to make laplap with it.' [10-10]

7.5   Transitive~intransitive verb pairs

Some verbs come in pairs of transitive and intransitive stems that are lexically different but display phonologically related forms. There are three verbs where transitivity is marked by the initial consonant (/k/ for intransitive, /x/ for transitive) (7.23a). In the pairs in (7.23b) there is additional phonological material on the intransitive verb.[66] In the verb pair in (7.23c), there is additional morphology on the transitive verb. None of these strategies appears to be synchronically productive.

(7.23)

Transitive~intransitive verb pairs		
	intransitive	transitive
a.	*kan* 'eat'	*han* 'eat (sth)'
	kaj(kaj) 'chew, bite, crush (with one's teeth)'	*haj* 'chew on, bite, crush (sth) (with one's teeth)'
	kër 'dig, harvest'	*hër* 'dig (e.g. a hole)'
b.	*panün* 'cook, roast, prepare food'	*pan* 'cook, roast (sth)'
	pasüs 'give birth'	*pas* 'give birth to (so)'
c.	*rang* 'cry'	*rangs* 'mourn (someone)'

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maniok buluk 'laplap with a base of cassava and beef as filling', *narog navüj* 'laplap with a base of plantain', *narog naih* 'laplap with fish as filling'.

[66] For *pasüs*, there is historical evidence that the longer (intransitive form) is inherited rather than the result of some sort of derivation, cf. PNCV *va-susu* (Clark 2009).

The pair of forms with the meaning 'dig' are illustrated in (7.24).

(7.24) *Taem mata-**kër**, ato parne ta-**hër**-i.*
When 1PL.EXCL-dig_{INTR} 3PL QNT 3PL-dig_{TR}-OBJ
'When we harvest yams, everyone digs them.' [58-77]
(Lit. 'When we dig [= harvest the yams], they all dig them [the yams out].')

7.6 Three-participant situations

In Ahamb, some verbs appear with three participants. Prototypically the semantic roles of participants are agent, theme and recipient. A list of such verbs is presented in (7.24). With most of these verbs, recipients (R) are optional. With some verbs the theme (T) may be optional. Because R-participants are typically introduced with a preposition, it is not clear that these verbs are truly ditransitive. The same prepositions are also used to introduce obliques (see §9.2.5).

Pus 'ask' allows for various encoding strategies, which are illustrated in the examples in (7.25). The recipient is introduced by the preposition *hën* in (7.25a-b) and by the preposition *vis-en* in (7.25c). In (7.25d), the recipient is not marked by a preposition. The theme is normally unmarked (7.25a,e). Both the theme and the recipient are optional – in (7.25b-c) the theme is omitted whereas in (7.25e) the recipient is omitted.

(7.24) Three-participant verbs

stem	gloss	coding
pus	'ask, inquire, request'	R-coding: *hën*, *visen*, no PREP
pësah	'give'	R-coding: *visen*
rav	'provide'	R-coding: *visen*
sër	'tell [a story]'	R-coding: *visen*
kar	'tell, say'	R-coding: *visen*
vësan / pësan	'teach'	R-coding: no PREP
		T-coding: *lön*, *hën*
velvel	'explain, to teach'	R-coding: *visen*, no PREP

(7.25) a. *Mata-r-pus   nvar kabur **hën**   hayug.*
1PL.EXCL-SBQT-ask oven.stone GNRP 2SG
'We ask you for oven stones [river stones used for stone ovens].' [79-120]

b. *Na-pus **hën**   hayug.*
1SG-ask GNRP 2SG
'I ask you.' [201-120]

c. *Mata-ro-pus*   ***visen   drato***.
   1PL.EXCL-IPFV-ask   GNRP   1PL.INCL
   'We are asking everyone (who is present).' [98-407]

d. *Na-pus*   ***hayug***.
   1SG-ask   2SG
   'I ask you.' [201-118]

e. *Na-pus*   ***karvin***.
   1SG-ask   question
   'I ask a question.' [201-119]

The examples in (7.26) illustrate verbs with recipients encoded with the preposition *vis-en*:

(7.26) a. *Atua   nga-**pësah**-ni   vis-en   hanaw.*
          God   3SG-give-OBJ   to-CNSTR   1SG
          'God gave it to me.' [27-141]

       b. *Ka-**rav**   kanin   vis-en   mato.*
          2SG-provide   food   to-CNSTR   1PL.EXCL
          'You provide us with food.' [77-16]

       c. *Na-**sër**-i   vis-en   hayug*
          1SG-tell-OBJ   to-CNSTR   2SG
          'I told it [the story] to you.' [18.2-51]

       d. *Mata-**kar**-e   vis-am*
          1PL.EXCL-say-OBJ   to-2SG
          'We are telling you.' [14-17]

       e. *Nga-ro-**velvel**-ni   vis-en   mato.*
          3SG-IPFV-explain-OBJ   to-CNSTR   1PL.EXCL
          'He explained it to us.' [89-103]

The verb *vësan* 'teach' (less commonly occurring as *pësan*), behaves differently in that its recipients are normally unmarked while the theme can be encoded by the prepositions *lön* (7.27a) and *hën* (7.27b).

(7.27) a. *Ara-ro-**vësan**   a   tete   s-aru*
          3DU-IPFV-teach   PERS   child   POSS.GNR-3DU

          lön   *naujin   sa   Atua.*
          LOCP   word   CLF.GNR   God
          'They teach their children God's word.' [66-2]

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b. *Nga-**vësan** hana **hën**-i.*
3SG-teach 1SG GNRP-OBJ
'He taught me it.' [27-55]

The verb *sëv* has a culturally specific meaning. It is used in the context of a ceremony where teenagers, through their parents, give gifts to their maternal uncles in exchange for their uncles' help later in life, both with advice and in practical or financial matters. This verb takes the children's parents, who provide the gifts, as agent (subject), the children, on whose behalf the gifts are given, as undergoer (direct object) and the gift recipient(s) as an indirect object introduced with the combination of the verb *vi* 'go to' and the preposition *lön*.[67]

(7.28) *Nga-sëv nakelwonin sa-mto ngail vi lön mto.*
3SG-sëv nephew POSS.GNR-2PL NSG go.to LOCP 2PL
'He *sëv* [gives gifts on behalf of] your nephews to you.' [71-158]

7.7 Valency decreasing with *ma-*

It is common for Oceanic languages to feature morphological devices which can change the valency of verbs. In an overview of valency-changing devices in Proto-Oceanic, Evans (2003: 267) reports that the POc prefix **ma-* "was used to derive an intransitive undergoer subject verb from a transitive verb." Ahamb's reflex of this POc prefix is *ma-*, and its function is, as described for POc, to detransitivise the verb, retaining the undergoer participant to express the sole argument of the resulting intransitive verb. The attested examples are listed in (7.29), ordered in sematic clusters. In (7.29a) are verbs referring to actions related to breaking. Verbs in this semantic category are very commonly detransitivised using reflexes of POc **ma-* in other Oceanic languages (Evans 2003: 270-271). In Ahamb, two other semantic clusters are related to the antonymous actions of appearing/emerging (7.29b) and disappearing/submerging/diminishing (7.29c).[68]

The right column in (7.29) contains the transitive verb stems to which *ma-* is attached. For two verbs – *mapihar* 'collapse, break, fall/be collapsed, broken, fallen' and *majëjlab* 'appear, emerge', only an undergoer subject intransitive verb (U-verb) has been attested starting with

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[67] *vi lön* is commonly used to encode destination of movement (see §3.5.1.2).

[68] The verb *madrödr* 'sink, be/become submerged in water' is also in this semantic category and features the prefix *ma-*, but it deviates from the rule in that it appears to derive from *drödr* 'be dry', which is a stative intransitive verb.

ma- but no transitive counterpart exists. While it is possible that the origins of the *ma-* segments of these stems may be unrelated to the POc detransitiviser **ma-*, their belonging to the attested semantic clusters provides evidence that these verbs could have been the product of detransitivisation of transitive stems, which later fell out of use.[69] In fact, some evidence of the transitive verbs in the right column of (7.29) losing their prototypical verbal status is provided by the fact that the underlined forms are coverbs, meaning that they cannot function as independent verbs, and are only attested as second verb of a serialisation-like constructions (see §11.2.2). *Ma-* derivations of coverbs are commonly attested in the corpus.

(7.29)		Detransitivised verbs with *ma-*	
		verb	gloss, etymology
	a.	*ma-(bur)bur*	'break/be broken' from *bur* 'break'
		ma-(kuj)kuj	'break/be broken' from *kuj* 'break'
		ma-(por)por	'break/be broken' from *(por)por ((pur)pur-e)*[70] 'break, compromise the unity of'
		ma-(dras)dras	'tear/be torn (clothes)' from *dras* 'tear'
		ma-ngodr	'be broken' from *ngodr* 'break (neck, pineapple)'
		ma-(kë)krov	'be broken, be severed, be interrupted' from *krov* 'cross, break through'
		ma-bët	'bend/be bent' from *bët* 'bend, turn'
		ma-droldrol	'become soft/be soft' from *drol* 'smash'
		ma-pihar	'collapse, break, fall/be collapsed, broken, fallen' (etymology unclear)
	b.	*ma-(kuv)kuv*	'come out, appear, emerge' from *kuv* 'remove (take out, bring out etc.)'
		ma-puypuy	'come apart (e.g. meat from bones while cooking)' from *puy* 'cut (e.g. meat)' (both forms are archaic)
		ma-jëjlab	'appear, emerge' (etymology unclear)
	c.	*ma-jur*	'go down; retreat (for sea at low tide); set (for sun)' from *jur* 'take down (pull down, bring down, shoot down etc.)'
		ma-drev	'be weak, be almost out (for fire)' from *drev* 'put out (fire)'
		ma-gungun	'be narrow' from *gungun* 'diminish; set on fire'

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[69] Other intransitive U-verbs that start with *ma-* may also be products of a diachronic process of detransitivisation but there is no synchronic evidence to support such a hypothesis, i.e. they do not belong to the clusters in (7.29a-c), nor do they have transitive counterparts. They do, however, appear to form a discrete semantic group of verbs that refer to completion: *manug* 'be ready (for food)', *masüsül* 'be ready, be smart', *mav* 'be dried, healed (for sore)', *mam* 'be ripe'. In other modern Oceanic languages, reflexes of POc **ma-* function "as a fossilised index occurring in the initial segment of undergoer subject verbs denoting properties" (Evans 2003: 268).

[70] *por* and *porpor* undergo stem vowel change when the object index *-e* is attached to them (see §7.3.3).

The examples in (7.30) demonstrate the use of some of the verbs listed above. In the first clause in (7.30a), the (transitive) coverb *kuj* 'break' appears as second verb in a serialisation-like constructions with actor and undergoer arguments, while in the second clause, as well as in example (7.30b) the verb *makuj* has only an undergoer argument. In (7.30a) the intransitive verb is an active verb, while in (7.30b) it is a stative verb.

(7.30) a. *...nge-r-jav*   **kuj**_{TR} *nhaw* *ili* *rëvëh,*
     3SG.SEC-SBQT-cut break rope ANA middle

     nhaw *ili* *nga-***makuj**_{INTR} *naur* *nga-ru.*
     rope ANA 3SG-break   place 3SG-two
     '…then she cuts the rope in the middle, the rope breaks in two.' [504-18]

b. *Barë-n*   *nga-***makuj**.
     head-3SG   3SG-be.broken
     'His head was broken.' [9-116]

Similarly, in (7.31a), the (transitive) coverb *kuv* 'remove (take out, bring out etc.)' appears with an object pro-index marking the undergoer. The detransitivised verb appears in simplex (7.31b) or reduplicated (7.31c) form. *Ma(kuv)kuv* appears 32 times in the corpus, always as an active, rather than stative verb.

(7.31) a. *Ata-tëh* **kuv**-*i.*
     3PL-hit   remove-OBJ
     'They knocked it [the tooth] out.' [74-59]

b. *Nahru-n*   *manki* *ili* *nga-***makuv**.
     skin-CNSTR monkey ANA 3SG-emerge
     'The monkey's skin separated [from its body].' [29-128]

c. *Naih* *ta-ro-***makuvkuv** *gmay.*
     fish 3PL-IPFV-emerge   come
     'The fish are coming out [of their hiding places].' [63-119]

The transitivity of *jur* 'take down' is demonstrated in (7.32a); in (7.32b) the intransitive verb *majur* 'come/be down' is used to refer to the setting of the sun. *Majur* is also commonly used to refer to the retreat of the sea at low tide. It is only used as an active verb.

(7.32) a. *jah* **jur**   *selwog*
     pull take.down sail
     'pull the sail down' [64-314]

b. *Namriar   nga-**majur**.*
sun   3SG-set
'The sun set.' [7-112]

In (7.33) the use of the transitive verb *bët* 'bend' and its intransitive counterpart *mabët* 'bend' are demonstrated.

(7.33) a. *A   Taso   nga-**bët**   npep   aven.*
PERS   T.   3SG-bend   paper   INDF.ART
'Taso folds a piece of paper.' [502-47]

b. *Naven   be   i-**mabët**   husür   navüj.*
fruit   NEGMOD   3SG.IRR-bend   follow   banana
'The fruit cannot bend in the shape of a banana.' [85-77]

Another valency decreasing strategy in Ahamb is by reduplication, which is the subject of the next subsection. Detransitivisation by reduplication is demonstrated in data sets (9.37) and (9.39) in §7.8.

7.8   Reduplication

Reduplication is the process in which a base form, or a part of it, is repeated. Reduplication is very common in Austronesian languages (Blust 2013: 412). In Ahamb, reduplication is mostly associated with verbs.[71] Many of the verb stems listed earlier in this chapter feature reduplication. Reduplication in Ahamb can take different forms: it can be total or partial, prefixed or suffixed (see §7.8.1). It can have different functions and offer various semantic contributions (see §7.8.2). While reduplication can be productive as both an inflectional and a derivational device (including as a detransitiviser), there are also many verb stems which suggest fossilised reduplication, meaning that the presumed base no longer occurs on its own in the Ahamb corpus (see §7.8.3).

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[71] Examples of reduplication in nouns can be found in §3.3.3.3, especially the examples in (3.16b) formed with the prefix *li-*. Such noun derivations can involve a verbal or nominal base.

7.8.1 Form of reduplication

The typological literature on reduplication distinguishes between total and partial reduplication (Moravcsik 2013: 127). Total reduplication involves the duplication of a complete form (a root or a whole word/phrase) while partial reduplication involves the duplication of a part of a root (either a whole syllable or parts of a syllable). In terms of position within the base, reduplication can be prefixed, suffixed on infixed, always adjacent to the portion of the base that is duplicated. Another typological constraint on reduplication is the number of times the duplifix is duplicated.

In Ahamb, there is both total and partial reduplication. Total reduplication can involve the repetition of a root but also of inflected forms or entire phrases. Examples are given in the next subsection on the function of reduplication.

Partial duplication in Ahamb is always prefixed.[72] The phonological makeup of the duplifix in partial reduplication varies. The addition of /ə/ in prefixed duplifixes when a single consonant of the base is duplicated is common as shown in the examples in (7.34). This is likely due to Ahamb's disfavouring of geminate consonants.

(7.34)	C_1ë-C_1X reduplication	
	reduplicated form	base
	këkay 'sing'	_kay_ 'call'
	bëbleg 'be very short'	_bleg_ 'be short'
	jëjkay 'each and every, one by one'	_jkay_ 'be one'
	vëvnah 'steal'	_vnah_ 'steal'

Examples of partial reduplication where the initial CV part of the base is duplicated are listed in (7.35) and reduplication of CVC clusters is exemplified in (7.36).

(7.35)	C_1V_1-C_1V_1X reduplication	
	reduplicated form	base
	nönör 'be straight, be alright'	_nör_ 'be straight, be alright'
	gagar 'swim'	_gar_ 'swim'
	tütür 'drop (liquid), drip'	_tür_ 'drop (liquid), drip'

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[72] Some surface forms in Ahamb appear to feature infixed reduplication, but such analysis is not supported by the underlying forms: (1) _makëkrov_ 'be broken, be severed, be interrupted' in (7.29a) in §7.7 is the product of valency decreasing with _ma-_ with an underlying prefixed reduplication on the base _krov_ 'cross, break through'; (2) some nouns derived with the prefix _li-_ often involve reduplication of the base (or an initial part of it), with the duplifix ending up between _li-_ and the base, constituting what appears on the surface as infixed reduplication. For example, _limarmaru_ 'coconut plantation' is derived from the noun _maru_ 'coconut (palm)' (which is not normally reduplicated).

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(7.36)   C$_1$V$_1$C$_2$-C$_1$V$_1$C$_2$X reduplication

reduplicated form	base
toktokar 'hurry'	*tokar* 'hurry'
matmatu 'be strong'	*matu* 'be strong'
panpanün 'cook, roast'	*panün* 'cook roast'
karkarëv 'watch'	*karëv* 'watch'

7.8.2   Function of reduplication

Total reduplication, especially when it constitutes the repetition of a whole word or phrase, is universally used for emphasis (Moravcsik 2013: 129). In Ahamb, the verb *van* 'go' is very commonly reduplicated when it is used in its uninflected form as a clause modifier to mark continuity and examples of up to four repetitions have been attested in the corpus (see §9.2.4.2).[73] In other cases, continuity suggested by reduplication of other bases can be reinforced by the use of a simplex occurrence of *van* 'go' with the function mentioned above, as in (7.37a-b). Similarly, the verb *gmay* 'come' is commonly reduplicated to emphasise the continuity of a movement towards a point, as in (7.37c). Other functions of total reduplication can be to express intensity as in (7.37d) or repetition as in (7.37e).

(7.37)   a.   *Nga-**hër-i**   **hër-i**   **hër-i**   **van***.
             3SG-dig-OBJ   dig-OBJ   dig-OBJ   go
             'He was digging it for a while.' [45-37]

         b.   *Nga-**lu**   **van**   **lu**   **van**   lu   par   kanin…*
             3SG-vomit   go   vomit   go   vomit   QNT   food
             'She vomited for a while (until) she threw up all the food…' [16-58]

         c.   *Nga-husür-i   **gmay**   **gmay**   **gmay**.*
             3SG-follow-OBJ   come   come   come
             'He was following it (the road) this way for a while.' [51-33]

         d.   ***Na-varus***   ***na-varus***   ***na-varus***   *na-kar…*
             1SG-paddle   1SG-paddle   1SG-paddle   1SG-say
             'I paddled for a long time and thought to myself…' [55-120]

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[73] This use of *van* is similar to Bislama *gogo*, which constitutes reduplication of *go* 'go' and can be repeated "an indefinite number of times" (Crowley 2004: 104).

e. **_Pës-i_**   _pës-i_   _pës-i_   _ale_   _nga-paj_   _van._
  tie-OBJ   tie-OBJ   tie-OBJ   LK   3SG-sleep   go
  '[They] wrap it over and over and then he sleeps for a while.' [87-42][74]

In (7.37a-b,d-e) above reduplication operates on the phrase level because the reduplicated forms are inflected verbs. However, there are many stems in Ahamb that contain total reduplication where the same base (normally monosyllabic) is repeated twice.[75] This is especially true for intransitive verbs. Examples were listed in §7.2.1, 7.2.2.

Reduplication (both total and partial) is associated with both derivation or inflection processes. The examples in (7.38) below demonstrate derivational reduplication where the reduplicated and simplex stems have different but related meanings. In addition, in the examples in (7.38a), the reduplicated stems are intransitive, while the simplex stems are transitive.

(7.38)	Examples of derivational total reduplication	
	simplex form	reduplicated from
a.	_bël_ 'throw'	_bëlbël_ 'be waving around (in the wind)'
	juv 'grate, plane'	_juvjuv_ 'perform the act of grating (bananas, tubers, coconut) or planing (wood)'
	sah 'climb'	_sahsah_ 'reach out one's hand (e.g. to take food)'
	tah 'hold'	_tahtah_ 'hold hands'
	_uj_ 'speak (a language)'	_ujuj_ 'talk'
b.	_van_ 'go'	_vanvan_ 'walk, roam around'
	kay 'call'[76]	_këkay_ 'sing'
	mer 'be green, unripe (for fruit)'	_mermer_ 'be black'
	pang 'to be lit up, burning, on fire'	_pangpang_ 'be red'

In the beginning of this subsection, it was demonstrated that reduplication can denote continuity. Habitual and other aspects can also be encoded by reduplication. In those cases, reduplication is considered inflectional. Moravcsik (2013: 129-131) provides a typological overview of the semantic properties of reduplicated stems. The most common properties can

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[74] This sentence refers to a traditional (and discontinued) practice of head binding where the head of an infant is wrapped in leaves or cloth to achieve a cranial peak or pointed skull.

[75] Typologically, there is a constraint on partial reduplication of no more than two repetitions (Moravcsik 2013: 128).

[76] The fully reduplicated form _kaykay_ is inflectional and means 'call repeatedly'.

be classified in two large groups. One involves an increase in quantity (e.g. plurality of entities, continuation of action, intensification of properties) while the other involves, in contrast, a decrease in quantity (e.g. diminution, attenuation of properties). In Ahamb, reduplication more commonly denotes an increase in participants, quantity, intensity or repetition, habituality etc., as in the reduplicated forms in dataset (7.39).

(7.39)	Reduplication encoding an increase in quantity	
	simplex from	reduplicated from
	subb 'sit'	*subbsubb* 'sit' (focus on duration)
	roh 'stay, be in a place, live (in a place)'	*rohroh* 'stay, be in a place, live (in a place)' (focus on duration)
	panün 'cook, roast'	*panpanün* 'cook, roast' (focus on duration)
	yov 'dive'	*yovyov* 'dive (repeatedly)'
	për 'have diarrhoea'	*përpër* 'have diarrhoea' (with a focus on the prolonged nature and/or repetition of activities associated with the condition)
	kan 'eat'	*kankan* 'eat at a ceremony, feast' (many participants involved)
	kuv 'remove'	*kuvkuv* 'remove (many things or repeatedly)'
	tamës 'hit'	*tamtamës* 'hit (repeatedly)'
	tokar 'hurry'	*toktokar* 'hurry' (added intensity)
	bbën 'kill'	*bbënbbën* 'kill' (added intensity)
	matu 'be strong'	*matmatu* 'be strong' (added intensity)

The examples in (7.40) illustrate the use of such forms in clauses. In (7.40a-c) reduplication encodes verbal number (Corbett 2000: 243-264; François 2019), i.e. plurality of participants.[77] In (7.40c-e) reduplication refers to a repeated or continuous nature of an action. Coverbs (see §11.2.2), many of which refer to acts such as breaking and killing, are very commonly reduplicated for added intensity. The semantic effect of reduplication can also be reinforced by other constituents or grammatical marking, such as the quantifier *parne* in (7.40b) and the imperfective *ro-* as in (7.40d-e).

(7.40) a. ***Ta-kan-kan*** *batëh naur aven* *nga-van* *sba-gmay* *jarpoh* *mi.*
3PL-DUP-eat because 3SG-go NEG-come appear again
'They eat [ceremonial food commemorating someone's death] because he left and never returned [and is presumed dead].' [12-24]

b. *Navrë-n* *hana* *parne* *ka-r-sev* ***kuv-kuv*** *parne.*
hair-CNSTR 1SG QNT 2SG-SBQT-shave DUP-remove QNT
'All my hair, shave it all off!' [47-72]

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[77] Plurality of entities is also the semantic contribution of reduplication in nouns derived with the prefix *li-*, see §3.3.3.3.

c. *Na-jav* **por-por** *par* *maru.*
    1SG-cut DUP-break already coconut
    'I already split the coconuts open.' [4-1]

d. *Mata-ro-***yov-yov** *van.*
    1PL.EXCL-IPFV-DUP-dive go
    'We are diving for a while.' [70-13]

e. *Nras* *nga-ro-***tü-tür** *lön.*
    seawater 3SG-IPFV-DUP-drop LOCP
    'Seawater is dropping on it.' [93-54]

There are a few noun compounds (usually neologisms) that are formed with the noun *nari* 'thing' followed by a reduplicated verb stem, where reduplication suggests habituality of action, e.g. *nari kan-kan* 'plate' from *kan* 'eat', *nari më-mrah* 'aircraft' from *mrah* 'fly' (see 3.49b in §3.6.2).

Two words have been attested where reduplication results in a decrease in intensity (although the effect could also be interpreted as an intensification of diminution): *bë-bleg* 'be very short' (from *bleg* 'be short') and *më-mdraw* 'be soft' (from *mdraw* 'be little, little bit').

Numerals can be reduplicated to take on a distributive meaning:

(7.41) a. *Ta-ro-gmay* **jë-jkay**.
            3PL-IPFV-come DUP-be.one
            'They are coming one by one.' [15.1-111]

        b. *Mata-ro-vi* **ru-ru**, *vi* **rü-rür** *lön*
            1PL.EXCL-IPFV-COP DUP-be.two COP DUP-be.three LOCP

            narog *nga-ro-jkenene.*
            laplap 3SG-IPFV-be.one
            'We normally are (=work) in groups of two, or three per each laplap.' [73-17]

7.8.3 Fossilised reduplication

The previous subsections showed that reduplication can be inflectional or derivational and it can denote continuity, plurality, intensity etc. In Ahamb, it is also possible for the reduplicated stem to be lexicalised without a presumed diachronic simplex stem (a base) having been attested. Many of the verbs listed in §7.2 display such *fossilised reduplication*. Fossilised reduplication has been attested in other Austronesian languages, e.g. Ross (1994:

560), including Malekula languages, such as Neverver (Barbour 2012: 215) and Uluveu (Healey 2013: 264).[78]

Semantically, many such stems can also be considered to express the categories associated with reduplication, as described above. Very commonly such verbs can be considered to refer to an action that is prolonged in nature, such as *lav-lavis* 'play', *gur-gur* 'prepare' and *kë-klas* 'tickle'. Many examples of fossilised reduplication come from the subclass of stative verbs, likely because by definition they refer to a (prolonged or stable) state, e.g. *müj-müj* 'be wet' and the stative verbs denoting colour (see §7.2.2). Other verbs can be considered to refer to intrinsic intensity, e.g. *püdr-püdr* 'be hot' and *bbut-bbutat* 'be entangled' or intrinsic plurality, e.g. *gë-glen* 'be colourful' and *bonbon* 'be together.

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[78] Healey uses the term "intrinsic reduplication".

CHAPTER 8.   THE VERB COMPLEX

8.1   Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the verb complex in Ahamb. The verb complex is defined here as "the verb and its accompanying morphemes", including the person and number of the subject, TAM marking, person and number of the object (Evans 2003: 10). In Ahamb the boundaries of the verb complex are defined as any material that can occur inside of the nominal subject and object. Any such nominal arguments, as well as peripheral adjuncts, are excluded from the verb complex itself.

The verb complex in Ahamb comprises a verbal head, accompanied by preverbal and postverbal modifiers. The negative modality marker *be/bi* can appear at the left edge of the verb complex. All other preverbal modifiers are prefixed and fill five possible positions before the stem. Postverbal modifiers are restricted to a small set of the class of adverbs and an object pro-index, which is suffixed when it appears immediately after the verb. A schematic representation of the verb complex structure, also listing all possible verb modifiers that can appear within the verb complex, is presented in (8.1):

(8.1)

left edge	prefixed modifiers					Verb stem	postverbal modifiers	
	I	II	III	IV	V		I	II
be/bi NEGMOD	SUBJECT INDEX (neutral/ sequential/ irrealis)	*r-* SBQT *bar-* FUT *sba-* NEG	*madr-* IMM.PS *mjë-* SEQ *mas-* NEC	*va-* GO	*ro-* IPFV		ADVERB	OBJECT PRO- INDEX

The first-order prefix position is filled by a near-obligatory subject index. Indexing may be accompanied by a nominal or pronominal subject, as shown in (8.2a) and (8.2b). When the subject index is omitted, the subject is expressed by either a nominal or pronominal expression, as in (8.2c) and (8.2d). Subject indexes may also be omitted when a previous verb

carries a subject index, and the same subject is maintained on subsequent clauses as in (8.2e).[79]

(8.2) a. **Barë-g   nga**-*tün.*
    head-1SG   3SG-be.sore
    'My head hurts.' [201-190]

   b. **Mato   mata**-*lugus   habat.*
    1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXPL-be.many very
    'There are very many of us.' [57-189]

   c. **Sema   ngot   lösin.**
    S.   not.want   bathing
    'Sema does not want to bathe.' [201-192]

   d. **Hana   paj.**
    1SG   sleep
    'I sleep.' [55-54]

   e. **Mata-tov**   *roh   likalim   ne,* **prag** *kanin   ne,*
    1PL.EXCL-stay be.located house   LIM   make   food   LIM

    ***paj**,   nga-hav   nogay,*   **va-lötu.**
    sleep   3SG-finish   now   GO-worship
    'We are just staying at the house, we make food, rest, and when finished, we go to church.' [17-91]

There are three paradigms of subject indexes, these being the neutral paradigm (see §8.2.1), the sequential paradigm (see §8.2.2), and the irrealis paradigm (see §8.2.3). The neutral subject indexes combine most productively with prefixes of other orders.

There are no examples in the corpus of a maximal verb complex, with all five prefix orders represented. However, there are many examples of two, three, and even four prefixes before the verb stem. Examples are given below, with a neutral index in (8.3a), a sequential index in (8.3b) and an irrealis index in (8.3c).

(8.3) a. *…na-mjë-va-ro-syu.*
    1SG-SEQ-GO-IPFV-fish
    '…then I will go fishing.' [234-24]

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[79] Clauses that contain multiple verbs and denote sequences of events, as the one in (8.2e), normally feature a sequential event subject index on all verbs to form sequential event constructions (§13.3) but examples without subject indexes have also been attested, although they are much less common (see also §13.3.5).

b. *...nge-r-va-ro-vnah*   *nabrav*   *ili.*
    3SG.SEC-SBQT-GO-IPFV-steal   breadfruit   ANA
    '... then he went to steal the breadfruit.' [45-13]

a. *Be*   *ni-bar-va-soh*   *barvare*   *in.*
    NEGMOD   1SG.IRR-FUT-GO-reach   country   DIST
    'I wouldn't be able to go to that country.' [18.1-
    70]

In Ahamb, verb modifiers can be affixed or freestanding. Deciding whether a modifier is an affix or freestanding is not always straightforward. Different criteria have been proposed in the literature. Subject indexes are considered bound when they cannot occur on their own (Haspelmath 2013: 212-213), which is the case with Ahamb's subject indexes. Applying the same and other criteria, Barbour & Williams (2017) conclude that subject indexes in Ahamb's neighbouring language Lamap are also bound forms. In the context of standard negation morphemes, Dahl (2010: 16) defines one of the criteria for considering a negator as an affix that it "interacts rather intimately with TAM and person/number marking". In the following analysis, I treat modifiers as prefixed when they fill in slots between the subject index and the stem. In each slot at least one modifier can interact phonologically with neighbouring morphemes, e.g. palatalisation of subject index + negator (see §8.2.1.3), degemination in prefixes (*bar-, ro-, madr-*) ending in trills when the occur before trill-initial verb stems (see §2.5.3.4).

The only freestanding prefixed modifier which is part of the verb complex is the *be/bi* negative modality marker, which normally appears following a nominal subject but preceding a subject index, at the left edge of the verb complex. *Be/bi* is described in detail in §§8.2.3.2, 10.4 and its status as a freestanding morpheme is discussed in §10.4.5.

A third-person object of a transitive verb is commonly encoded with a postpositioned object pro-index, which has been attested in four different forms (*-ni, -i, -e, -o*, see §§7.3, 8.6). A small set of adverbs (see §8.5) can appear between the verb stem and the object pro-index.

The status of the object pro-index, which follows the verb stem, is somewhat problematic. On the one hand, there is evidence of morphophonological processes between the stem and the object pro-index – stem vowel change before *-e* (see §2.5.7), syncope before *-i* (see §2.5.3.5). On the other hand, when an adverb appears between the stem and the object pro-index, the object pro-index is always *ni*. Therefore, object pro-indexes are treated here as suffixes when

they appear immediately after the stem, and as a freestanding morpheme, when an adverb appears between the stem and the object pro-index.

What follows is a description of the verb modifiers that are part of the verb complex. The three paradigms of subject indexes are described first, with their co-occurring modifiers. Following this, postverbal modifiers are presented, and the distribution of object suffixes is illustrated.

8.2   Subject/mood indexing and second/third-order prefixes

It is common for the languages of Malekula and Vanuatu to feature subject indexes, which precede the verbs. These subject indexes normally encode person and number, but also commonly include TAM marking (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 45). In the languages of Malekula, a distinction between realis and irrealis mood is commonly made (e.g. Crowley 2006c: 68-69; Dimock 2009: 135; Barbour 2012: 164; Healey 2013: 187; Wessels 2013: 107; Pearce 2015: 210).

As noted above, in Ahamb there are three separate paradigms of subject indexes. Considerable allomorphy is attested in each paradigm, some of which can be understood in terms of morphophonological processes, and some of which can be explained in terms of language change, with contemporary forms as well as some archaic forms of the indexes attested in natural speech.

In terms of form, Ahamb's subject indexes closely reflect the form of the freestanding personal pronouns, especially the non-singular forms. Examples of the first-person pronouns and corresponding subject indexes are presented in (8.4).

(8.4)	Gloss	Independent pronoun	Neutral subject index
	1SG	*ahna(w)/hana(w)*	*na-*
	1DU.INCL	*draru*	*dra(ra)-*[80]
	1DU.EXCL	*maru*	*mara-*
	1PL.INCL	*drato*	*drata-*
	1PL.EXCL	*mato*	*mata-*

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[80] The first person dual inclusive subject indexes feature the trills /ᴅ/ and /r/ and can undergo haplology.

The three paradigms of subject indexes are distinguished by their vowels. The full paradigms of subject indexes are listed in the subsections below.

8.2.1 Neutral subject indexes

The most commonly used subject indexes in Ahamb are the ones in the neutral paradigm. They all normally feature the vowel /a/ throughout as shown in Table 8-1. The neutral indexes have allomorphs that feature the vowel /ə/ when they combine with the modifiers *bar-* and *sba-* (see §§8.2.1.3, 8.2.1.4) The plural forms also undergo palatalisation with *sba-* (see §8.2.1.3).

Table 8-1. Neutral subject index paradigm.

	SG		DU	PL
1	*na-*	INCL	*dra(ra)-*	*drata-*
		EXCL	*mara-*	*mata-*
2	*ka-/ga-*		*mra-*	*mta-*
3	*nga-*		*(a)ra-*	*(a)ta-*

The more common form of the second-person singular index features the /k/ consonant. The *ga-* allomorph is usually found directly after the second person singular pronoun *hayug* 'you (SG)', in which case the voicing of the consonant in the subject index can be attributed to carryover effects from the final [ŋg] of the pronoun, as in (8.5a). However, *ga-* can occur in other environments too, usually among elderly speakers as in (8.5b).

(8.5) a. *Hayug*   ***ga****-tobat-ni.*
           2SG   2SG-start-OBJ
           'You start it.' [57-50]

      b. *Nras* *nga-r-mes*   ***ga****-r-sar*   *naurav.*
           sea   3SG-SBQT-dry 2SG-SBQT-spear bluefish
           'The tide will go down and you will spear a bluefish.' [112-59]

Neutral indexes are attested in constructions that express present, past and future events, as well as in imperative constructions. The indexes are glossed for person and number values only. The examples in (8.6) demonstrate the use of neutral subject indexes in clauses where past time is clearly marked by an overt expression of time. In (8.6b), 'today' refers to past time, since the action of 'coming' is completed before the moment of speech.

(8.6) a. ***Na***-*sev*   ***lubung.***
      1SG-dance   yesterday
      'I danced yesterday.' [201-134]

    b. ***Na***-*gmay* *lön*   ***nabong*** ***man*** ***kiaha…***
       1SG-come LOCP day   LOC today
       'I have come [here] today…' [38-25]

The examples in (8.7) show the use of neutral indexes in clauses with present temporal location. The first clause involves an event that is in progress at the moment of speech,[81] and the second clause illustrates a stative situation, which is true at the moment of speech.

(8.7) a. ***Na***-*han* *nmaru*   *nh-ag.*
      1SG-eat   coconut POSS.ALIM-1SG
      'I am eating my coconut.' [503-28]

    b. *Marog* *iha*   ***nga***-*mermer* *habat.*
       cloud   PROX 3SG-be.black much
       'This cloud is very black.' [231-8]

The examples in (8.8) show the use of neutral indexes with overt expressions of future time.

(8.8) a. ***Lovuk***   ***nga***-*hav*   *gasin* *s-ag.*
      tomorrow   3SG-finish work POSS.GNR-1SG
      'My work will finish tomorrow.' [29-100]

    b. ***Rohbay*** ***lön***   ***fraede*** *mara-bar.*
       in.future LOCP Friday 1DU.EXCL-fight
       'We will fight on Friday.' [47-48]

Neutral indexes also occur when the temporal location of situations is clear from the context, or signalled in previous clauses. In such cases, it is not necessary to encode time explicitly. For example, in storytelling, when past events are being retold, the default indexes are normally used without temporal marking being obligatory within the clause, as in (8.9), which is taken from a story about a cyclone that occurred in the past. In the free translations of examples throughout this work, the appropriate tense is used as suggested by the context.

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[81] Such clauses more commonly feature the imperfect modifier *ro-* (see §8.4).

(8.9)   *Nrang tamës   **nga**-mras-i.*
      cyclone   3SG-spoil-OBJ
      'The cyclone spoilt it.' [1-14]

Example (8.10) shows an imperative clause, where the only morphology on the verb is the neutral second-person singular index. This is one of several options that speakers use to express commands (see §9.4).

(8.10)   ***Ka**-gmay   aha!*
      2SG-come   here
      'Come here!' [201-75]

8.2.1.1   *Neutral indexes with* **r**- *'SBQT'*

Neutral subject indexes commonly combine with the second-order prefix *r-* to express future time, with and without lexical expressions of time. The prefix *r-* is distributed in clauses that refer to unrealised events located in future time, in some imperative constructions, in prospective complements including desiderative and ability complements, and in constructions with temporally sequenced events. In this work, it is referred to as *subsequential marker* and glossed SBQT.

An important property of *r-* is its optionality. It occurs in many future time clauses, and some imperatives, but not all (see §8.2.1). Likewise, it occurs in many constructions that display sequential events, but it is not obligatory. Its use in sequential event constructions is presented in §8.2.2.2, 13.3.1. *R-* is most consistently used in prospective complements (see §12.1), but again, it does not occur in all prospective complements. When the following morpheme starts with /r/, it is not always clear whether *-r* is present due to degemination (see §2.5.3.4).

Th examples in (8.11) show the future function of *r-*.

(8.11)   a.   ***Na-r**-varus   lön   nwog   van   vi   ur   **lovuk.***
              1SG-SBQT-paddle   LOCP   canoe   go   go.to   mainland   tomorrow
              'I will paddle my canoe to the mainland tomorrow.' [201-43]

       b.   ***Lovuk**   drata-**r**-parëg   naher.*
              tomorrow   1PL.INCL-SBQT-make.laplap   octopus
              'Tomorrow we will make laplap (with) octopus.' [76-12]

c. *Iha,*   *na-**r**-jëb-i*   **nogha.**
   DEM.PRN   1SG-SBQT-shoot-OBJ   now
   'This one, I will shoot it now.' [70-54]

d. **Rohbay**   *dra-**r**-saw*   *mahobër*   *iha.*
   in.future   1DU.INCL-SBQT-cut   shark   PROX
   We will cut this shark.' [10-85]

e. **Rohbay**   *naujin*   *man*   *Hamb*   *nga-**r**-havj*   *par*
   in.future   language   man   Ahamb   3SG-SBQT-cover   QNT

   nran   *nga-leb.*
   land   3SG-be.big
   'The Ahamb language will spread over the [Malekula] mainland areas.' [22-122]

Neutral indexes, in combination with the subsequential *r*-prefix can be used to form imperatives as in (8.12). The meaning of this example is identical to that of the imperative clause in (8.10) above, which is formed without the *r-* prefix.

(8.12)   *Ka-**r**-gmay*   *aha!*
         2SG-SBQT-come   here
         'Come here!' [201-303]

The examples in (8.13) demonstrate the use of neutral indexes with the *r-* prefix marking a verbal complement of verbs such as *palong* 'want', *nov(l)kar* 'be able to', *dras* 'not be able to', *ngot* 'not want', *kor rës* 'try' and *kar* 'intend' (see §12.2 for a discussion of this type of complementation strategy). The final example (8.13g) shows a desiderative complement without the *r*-prefix. While there appears to be a preference for forming complements with the *r*-prefix, it is not obligatory in these constructions.

(8.13)   a.   *Na-palong*   *na-**r**-han*   *narog*   *barme.*
              1SG-want   1SG-SBQT-eat   laplap   island.cabbage
              'I want to eat laplap with island cabbage.' [201-46]

         b.   *Mata-novkar*   *mata-**r**-van*   *vi*   *lihayhay.*
              1PL.EXCL-can   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-go   go.to   jungle
              'We can go to the jungle.' [69-13]

         c.   *Na-dras*   *na-**r**-paj.*
              1SG-not.be.able.to   1SG-SBQT-sleep
              'I could not sleep.' [36-78]

d. *Ta-ngot*   *ta-**r**-mdras-i.*
   3PL-not.want   3PL-SBQT-spoil-OBJ
   'They don't want to spoil him.' [37-266]

e. *Mara-kor*   *rës*   *mara-**r**-varus*   *ai.*
   1DU.EXCL-do   see   1DU.EXCL-SBQT-paddle   there
   'We try to paddle there.' [56-22]

f. *Ta-kar*   *ta-**r**-gmay.*
   3PL-say   3PL-SBQT-come
   'They intend/decide to come.' [92-40]

g. *Na-palong*   *na-han*   *narog.*
   1SG-want   1SG-eat   laplap
   'I want to eat laplap' [201-195]

Finally, neutral indexes with the *r-* prefix are used after the subordinator *hën* 'in order to, so that' (see §13.2.2.1):

(8.14)   a. *Drata-jiji*   ***hën***   *drata-**r**-vër*   *skulfi.*
         1PL.INCL-shell.out   in.order.to   1PL.INCL-SBQT-pay   school fee
         'We shell out [copra] in order to pay school fees.' [1-19]

       b. *...hën*   *Atua*   *nga-**r**-jubran*   *aru.*
         in.order.to   God   3SG-SBQT-join   3DU
         '...for God to join them together as one.' [72-53]

       c. *Nga-gmay*   *hën*   *nga-**r**-vnah*   *nabrav*   *in.*
         3SG-come   in.order.to   3SG-SBQT-steal   breadfruit   DIST
         'He came to steal the breadfruit.' [45-21]

8.2.1.2   *Neutral indexes with* **bar-** *'FUT'*

Neutral subject indexes can combine with the future morpheme *bar-*. Given the presence of /r/, and the overlap in function, this morpheme may be historically related to the subsequential *r*-prefix. Neutral indexes present with the vowel /ə/ rather than the expected /a/ vowel when occurring in combination with *bar-*, as presented in Table 8-2. The schwa is short, and in some instances omitted entirely (see §2.3.3.5), so these forms are treated as *reduced forms* of the neutral subject indexes. The third person singular subject index is reduced to zero. These reduced forms of the neutral subject indexes also appear before the standard negation prefix *sba-* where the same and other morphophonological processes take place (see §8.2.3.1).

Table 8-2. Neutral subject index forms with bar- *'FUT'*

	SG			DU			PL	
1	*na-*	> *në-bar-*	INCL	*dra(ra)-*	>*drë-bar-*[82]		*drata-*	>*drëtë-bar*
			EXCL	*mara-*	>*mërë-bar*		*mata-*	>*mëtë-bar*
2	*ka-*	> *kë-bar-*		*mra-*	>*mrë-bar-*		*mta-*	>*mtë-bar*
3	*nga-*	> *Ø-bar-*		*(a)ra-*	>*(a)rë-bar-*		*(a)ta-*	>*(a)të-bar*

The examples in (8.15) illustrate the use of *bar* to signal future time.

(8.15)   a.   *Aru   rë-**bar**-sëlvar.*
            3DU   3DU-FUT-tell.story
            'The two of them will tell a story.' [78-1]

      b.   *Perjag   mëtë-**bar**-barbar*
            almost   1PL.EXCL-FUT-fight
            'We were almost going to fight.' [101-51]

      c.   *Taso   **Ø-bar-r**oh   jbo-n*
            Taso   3SG-FUT-stay   alone-CNSTR
            'Taso will stay alone.' [44-37]

Since it ends in /r/, when *bar-* is followed by another morph starting with /r/ (as in 8.15c), no consonant gemination is observed in speech (see §2.5.3.4).

Verbs that are modified by *bar-* can be negated with the help of the negative modality marker *be,*[83] which refers to impossibility or inability (see §10.4):

(8.16)   a.   *Naur   **be**   bar-ponpon   lön   hana.*
            place   NEGMOD   FUT-be.dark   LOCP   1SG
            'Night time won't catch me [out on the sea].' [55-120]

      b.   ***Be**   mtë-**bar**-rs   hana   mi.*
            NEGMOD   2PL-FUT-see   1SG   again
            'You will never see me again.' [48-111]

Bar- is commonly used in conditional clauses (see §13.2.3).

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[82] Haplology appears to be mandatory in this case, cf. Footnote 80 in §8.2.

[83] *Be* is normally in free variation with *bi*. However *bi* has never been attested in connection with *bar-*. The lack of examples with *bi* in the corpus may also be due to the fact that such constructions are not commonly attested.

8.2.1.3 Neutral indexes with **sba-** '*NEG*'

Like *bar-,* the standard negator *sba-* combines with the series of reduced neutral subject indexes, featuring /ə/. Besides the processes described in §8.2.1.2 above, in this case, the final /ə/ is deleted and the combination of the /t/ in the plural forms and the initial /s/ of *sba* produces a palatalised transition ([tʃ]) between the subject index and the negator in the plural forms.[84] Thus the boundary between the subject index and the standard negator is blurred and the whole sequence is glossed as one morpheme.

Table 8-3. Neutral subject index forms with sba- 'NEG'

	SG			DU		PL	
1	*na*	> *në-sba-*	INCL	*dra(ra)-*	>*drë-sba-*	*drata-*	>*drëjba-*
			EXCL	*mara-*	>*mërë-sba-*	*mata-*	>*mëjba-*
2	*ka-*	> *kë-sba-*		*mra-*	>*mrë-sba-*	*mta-*	>*mjba-*[85]
3	*nga-*	> *Ø-sba-*		*(a)ra-*	>*(a)rë-sba-*	*(a)ta-*	>*(a)jba-*

The examples in (8.17) illustrate the use of selected neutral subject indexes with *sba-*. A full description of standard negation, including more examples, is provided in §10.2.

(8.17) a. ***Në-sba**-novkar*   *hayug.*
            1SG-NEG-know   2SG
            'I don't know you.' [25-99]

      b. *Nari   ha   **sba**-gan   nren.*
            thing   PROX   NEG-resemble   man
            'This thing does not resemble a human being.' [24-85]

      c. ***Rë-sba**-visen   *nahre.*
            3DU-NEG-have   child
            'They did not have a child.' [8-3]

      d. ***Mjba**-novkar   *nahs-en   nhay   iha.*
            2PL.NEG-know   name-CNSTR   tree   PROX
            'You don't know the name of this tree.' [30-118]

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[84] A similar process of palatalisation is also attested in other Malekula languages, e.g. Naman (Crowley 2006b: 43).

[85] The merger between the subject index and *sba-* results in a CCC cluster in the syllable onset in this form. Such clusters are phonotactically disfavoured and in such cases the initial /m/ is syllabic or a short /ə/ is inserted after /m/. Given that the /ə/ vowels in these indexes are generally short, this means that a clear distinction is not necessarily heard between the first person plural exclusive form *mëjba-* and the second person plural form *mjba-*. However, the spelling distinction is kept here to reflect the underlying forms *mata-* and *mta-*. The same is valid for the first person exclusive ~ second person pairs *mërë-* ~ *mrë-* and *mëtë-* ~ *mtë-* (the latter pair is only attested with *bar-*, see Table 8-2).

8.2.1.4 Neutral indexes with **madr-** *'IMM.PST'* and **mjë-** *'SEQ'*

The second-order prefixes *madr-* and *mjë-* denote actions that occur in proximity to the moment of speech or reference time. *Madr-* is likely to be etymologically related to the noun *madrën* 'back', and it encodes recent prior events. *Madr-* is not a commonly used modifier with just over a dozen examples in the corpus. It most commonly occurs with verbs that mean 'pass away' or 'be born', as in examples (8.18a-c).

(8.18) a. *Nga-**madr-maj**   ne.*
            3SG-IMM.PST-die   LIM
            'He died just recently.' [6-94]

   b. *Vavu tötöt   nga-**madr-van**,*
       grandfather   3SG-IMM.PST-go

       *vavu tötöt   s-mato   nga-**madr**-lüs.*
       grandfather   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL   3SG-IMM.PST-be.lost
       'Grandfather passed away recently, our grandfather was lost recently.' [71-79]

   c. *Ata-**madr-ro**-porah.*
       3PL-IMM.PST-IPFV-be.born
       'They had just been born.' [60-2]

   d. *Ta-**madr-ro**-ngadrsah   Barovmaru.*
       3PL-IMM.PST-IPFV-climb   B.
       'They were just climbing [the hill] Barovmaru.' [71-249]

   e. *Iha   ta-**madr-rav**-i   gmay.*
       DEM.PRN   3PL-IMM.PST-carry-OBJ   come
       'This one [banana] they just brought it.' [85-94]

   f. *Nga-**madr-dr**ëm   dran   pajën.*
       3SG-IMM.PST-fall.down   away   branch
       'It has just fallen from the branch.' [63-50]

   g. *Në-**sba-madr**-gmay.*
       1SG-NEG-IMM.PST-come
       'I did not arrive recently.' [234-26]

The notion of recent past is relative. The statements in examples (8.18a-b) had happened months earlier, but they refer to the latest events of their kind in the community. The clause in (8.18d) was uttered almost immediately after a phone call to a group of people who had announced their current location. In example (8.18e), the type of banana in question was

brought to the community from overseas a good while earlier than when this sentence was uttered, but the speaker uses *madr-* to emphasise that this is the latest addition to an array of types of banana that are cultivated by the community.

Since the final consonant in *madr-* is the trill /D/, there is syncope of any subsequent /r/, such as in the imperfective prefix *ro-*, as in examples (8.18c-d), or a stem starting with /r/, as in example (8.18e). This means that there is no lengthening of the trilling portion of /D/ (see §2.5.3.4). When *madr-* is followed by a morpheme starting with /D/ as in example (8.18f), both segments are pronounced in sequence.

Example (8.18g) illustrates the status of *madr-* as a third-order prefix, where it appears after the standard negator *sba-*.

Mjë- is a third-order prefix that encodes the notion of temporal sequence. It appears to be related to the adverb *mjëg* 'then, afterwards', and it regularly co-occurs with *mjëg,* although it is not obligatory. The examples in (8.19) show *mjë-* with neutral subject indexes. In (8.19d) *mjë-* appears after the second-order prefix *r-* illustrating its classification with other third-order prefixes.

(8.19) a. *Na-paj   nlam   aha   nog   na-**mjë**-van.*
            1SG-carry   lamp   here   already   1SG-**SEQ**-go
            'I brought this lamp and then went away.' [55-18]

        b. ***Mjëg***   *hayug   ga-**mjë**-vuj-e.*
            afterwards   2SG   2SG-SEQ-nail-OBJ
            'Then you nail it down.' [86-41]

        c. *Dram   in   nga-r-hav   gamuj,*
            yam   DIST   3SG-SBQT-finish   first

            *maniok   ta-**mjë**-tov   roh   ai.*
            cassava   3PL-SEQ-stay   be.located   here
            'First all the yams will be finished, then all the cassava will remain.' [58-128]

        d. *Ta-**r**-**mjë**-lum   kava.*
            3PL-SBQT-SEQ-plant   kava
            'Then they are going to plant kava.' [58-73]

8.2.1.5   Neutral indexes with **mas-** 'NEC'

The prefix *mas-* most often expresses necessity or obligation and is here glossed as necessative mood (NEC). It is likely to be a borrowing from Bislama *mas* which also

expresses obligation (Crowley 2004: 97). This analysis aligns with speaker perceptions of *mas* as a borrowing.[86]

The examples in (8.20) demonstrate the use of *mas-* to mark necessity, whereas in example (8.20d) it marks obligation. *Mas-* can occur after the *r-*prefix.

(8.20)   a.   *Ka-**mas**-habur   narog   h-ag.*
             2SG-NEC-wrap   laplap   POSS.ALIM-1SG
             'You need to pack a piece of laplap for me.' [41-39]

         b.   *Mata-**mas**-prag   npep   s-mato   ngail.*
             1PL.EXCL-NEC-make   paper   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL   NSG
             'We need to prepare our documents [(passport, visa), if we want to go to New Zealand].' [18.1-44]

         c.   *Ka-r-**mas**-rav   nabut   aha.*
             2SG-SBQT-NEC-take   boat   here
             '[The land road is not good, so] you will need to take a boat here.' [107-110]

         d.   *Mto   drës   mta-**mas**-ken-i.*
             2PL   INDF   2PL-NEC-take-OBJ
             'One of you needs to take her [as wife].' [231-10]

8.2.2   Sequential event subject indexes

8.2.2.1   *Function and form*

Some languages of Vanuatu, including languages of Malekula, use a special prefix, known as an *echo index* on the second and subsequent verb in complex clauses that encode events that occur in sequence (Lynch 1983; de Sousa & Hammond 2010; Dodd 2014; Hammond 2014; Barbour & Dodd 2017; Dodd 2018). The echo index is not marked for person, but instead copies the information encoded by the subject index of the first verb. Ahamb does not have a special echo indexing morpheme, but commonly marks the second and subsequent verbs in such constructions with indexes from the paradigm of *sequential event subject indexes*. In such *sequential event constructions* (SECs), the first verb is usually marked with a neutral subject index. Subsequent clauses carry indexes from the sequential event paradigm. SECs are described in detail in §13.3.

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[86] *Mas* appears to have been borrowed into a a large number of diverse Vanuatu languages, indicating a presumed widespread gap that needed filling (John Lynch, pers.comm.).

The forms in the sequential event index paradigm are normally characterised by the vowel /e/, as illustrated in Table 8-4. Less common allomorphs for some of the forms have been attested, featuring the front rounded vowel /ø/, given in square brackets in Table 8-4. These forms have only been attested before the subsequential marker *r-* (see §8.2.2.2, next section). The variation can be considered to be phonologically conditioned, since /ø/ generally tends to appear between coronal consonants (see §2.4.4). In line with this condition, the front rounded vowel appears as the first vowel in *drötö-* (between two coronal consonants) but not in *matö-* (after a bilabial consonant). The forms with /ø/ are mostly used by older speakers and Ahamb speakers report that they are archaic.[87]

Table 8-4. Sequential event subject index paradigm (archaic indexes in square brackets)

	SG		DU[88]	PL
1	*ne-* [*nö-*]	INCL	*dre-*[89]	*drete-* [*drötö-*]
		EXCL	*mere-*	*mete-* [*matö-*]
2	*ke-/ge-*		*mre-*	*mte-* [*mtö-*]
3	*nge-*		*(a)re-* [*(a)rö-*]	*(a)te-* [*atö-*]

The examples in (8.21) demonstrate the use of sequential event subject indexes in the second verb in SECs. More examples, including longer SECs, can be found in §13.3.

(8.21) a. ***Ta**-gmay*   ***te**-prag*   *gasin.*
            3PL-come   3PL.SEC-do   work
            'They come and they work.' [95-14]

         b. ***Mata**-van*   ***mete**-va-rës*   *nren   aven…*
             1PL.EXCL-go   1PL.EXCL.SEC-GO-see   man   REL
             'We go and see a man, who…' [79-95]

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[87] The above evidence suggests a possible diachronic process where /a/ was raised to /ø/ in these forms between coronal consonants. A process of derounding of /ø/ to /e/ (accompanied by the spread of /e/ through vowel harmony throughout the forms as in *me̱te-* and *me̱re-*) appears to be at an advanced stage. By generalisation, the second- and third-person singular forms, where the underlying condition of coronal vowels does not exist, also underwent a vowel change.

[88] For the first and second person dual, the expected archaic forms (*drö(rö)-, *marö-* and *mrö-*) have not been attested. This may be due to the low frequency of their occurrence in the corupus. While the attested first- and second-person dual sequential subject indexes (with /e/) appear less than ten times each in the corpus, the third-person dual index and the corresponding plural indexes (where the archaic forms have been attested) have between 45 occurrences (for *mte-/mtö-*) and over 150 occurrences (for *mete-/matö-*). The higher frequency of occurrence means that the archaic forms are more likely to be attested.

[89] The expected first-person inclusive form **drere-* has not been attested; haplology appears to be obligatory here (see Footnote 80 in §8.2).

Sequential event indexes have not been attested co-occurring with the second and third-order prefixes *sba-* 'NEG', *bar-* 'FUT', *madr-* 'IMM.PST' and *mas-* 'NEC'. There is only one example in the corpus where sequentiality is redundantly marked by both a sequential index and the sequential marker *mjë-*:

(8.22) **Nga**-*rëng*   *karij*   *nog*   *lön*   *navës*
    3SG-put   bullet   already   LOCP   gun

    nge-mjë-*rëng-i*   *nga-paj*   *roh.*
    3SG.SEC-SEQ-put-OBJ   3SG-lie   be.located
    'He put a bullet in the gun, then he left it aside.' [11.1-3]

8.2.2.2   *Sequential event indexes with* **r-** *'SBQT'*

Sequential event indexes regularly combine with the second-order subsequential prefix *r-*, and thus display multiple encoding of the notion of sequence. As the examples in the previous section have shown, *r-* is not obligatory in SECs. Depending on the properties of the larger SEC, both the first clause, and the subsequent clauses may be coded with *r-*.

The examples in (8.23) demonstrate the use of sequential indexes with the *r*-prefix. Example (8.23a) may involve the *r*-prefix on the initial clause; however automatic degemination means that any analysis of an underlying *r-* cannot be proven. Example (8.23b) more clearly lacks the *r*-prefix on the initial verb. In (8.23c), both verbs carry the *r*-prefix, with the events positioned in future time. The second verb *purpur-e* 'break'[90] does not carry an index because it forms a serialisation-like construction with *tüs* 'tear' (see §11.2.2). In example (8.23d) both verbs in the SEC carry the *r*-prefix because the clause is introduced by the purposive subordinator *hën*, which is commonly followed by a verb marked with *r-* (see §13.2.2.1).

(8.23) a. **Na**-*rav*   *naser*   *s-ag*   **ne-r**-*van*   *vi*   *ras.*
        1SG-take   road   POSS.GNR-1S   1SG-SBQT-go   go.to   sea
        'I am going to hit the road and go to the coast.' [46-51]

    b. **Ta**-*jav-i*   **ate-r**-*plëv-i*   *gmay*   *a*   *ras.*
        3PL-cut-OBJ   3PL-SBQT-pull-OBJ   come   LOC   sea
        'They cut it and then they pull it to the sea.' [42-15]

    c. **Na-r**-*tüs*   *purpur-e*   *mi*   *beay*   **ne-r**-*vësvës-i.*
        1SG-SBQT-tear   break-OBJ   just   INTENT   1SG-SBQT-roll-OBJ
        'I have yet to tear it [the pandanus into strips] and roll it.' [27-144]

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[90] In fact, a coverb (§11.2.2)

d. *...hën*   **ta-r-*han-i***   **te-r-*paj.***
    in.order.to   3PL-SBQT-eat-OBJ   3PL-SBQT-sleep
    '...so that they can eat it and go to sleep.' [17-42]

The examples in (8.24) demonstrate the use of sequential indexes in their archaic forms with /ø/, which only appear before the *r-* prefix. In examples (8.24d-e) the bare stems *van* and *gmay* are deicitc markers (see §9.2.8) which is why they do not carry any indexes.

(8.24)   a.   *Ata-jar-ni*   **atö-r-*varus.***
          3PL-drag-OBJ   3PL-SBQT-paddle
          'They drag it [the canoe to the sea] and they paddle [away].' [42-47]

         b.   *Ata-van*   **atö-r-*va-rs***   *nman*   *ili.*
          3PL-go   3PL-SBQT-GO-see   bird   ANA
          'They go and see this bird.' [103-13]

         c.   *Na-r-van*   **nö-r-*va-jiji***   *maru.*
          1SG-SBQT-go   1SG-SBQT-GO-shell.out   copra
          'I go and shell out copra.' [4-25]

         d.   *Ata-van*   *a*   *ur*   *gmay*   **tö-r-*tov***   *aha.*
          3PL-go   LOC   mainland   come   3PL-SBQT-stay   here
          'They came from the mainland and stayed here.' [22-194]

         e.   *Mata-van*   *aha*   *van*   **matö-r-*va-tobat***   *nayovin.*
          1PL.EXCL-go   here   go   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-GO-start   diving
          'We go to this place, we start diving.' [6-13]

As mentioned above, when the following morpheme (the verb stem or another modifier) starts with /r/, it is unclear whether the *r-* marker is involved or not:

(8.25)   *Ange*   *nga-van*   *nge-(**r**)-rës*   *namriar.*
       3SG   3SG-go   3SG-(SBQT)-see   sun
       'He went and saw/met the sun.' [254-8]

8.2.3   Irrealis subject indexes

Ahamb's irrealis subject indexes are listed in Table 8-5. Irrealis indexes feature the vowel /i/. Allomorphs with /u/ (/ə/ as the first vowel in the first-person dual and all plural forms) also exist, but they are uncommon, with only the first- and second-person singular forms attested in the corpus of natural speech. The forms with /u/ are used only by older speakers, who

report that they are archaic. The other forms in this series of allomorphs were elicited from two older speakers.

Table 8-5. Irrealis subject index paradigm (archaic indexes in square brackets)

	SG		DU	PL
1	*ni-* [*nu-*]	INCL	*dri-* [*drëru-*]	*driti-* [*drëtu-*]
		EXCL	*miri-* [*mëru-*]	*miti-* [*mëtu-*]
2	*ki-/gi-* [*ku-/gu-*]		*mri-* [*mru-*]	*mti-* [*mtu-*]
3	*i-* [*u-*]		*(a)ri-* [*aru-*]	*(a)ti-* [*atu-*]

In addition to person and number, the irrealis subject indexes encode the notion of unreality. The term *irrealis* mood is used here in its broad sense to refer to events that are not known to have happened at the time an utterance is produced. In other Malekula languages irrealis markers are commonly used to encode future temporal location, e.g. in Ahamb's neighbours Lamap (Williams 2019: 115), Uluveu (Healey 2013: 189) and Nahavaq (Dimock 2009: 138).[91] In Ahamb, the irrealis subject indexes are not normally used to denote future time; they may be used in constructions relating to the future but in those constructions the focus is on the hypothetical nature of the events.

In Ahamb, irrealis indexes are commonly used to mark interrogative clauses (see §8.2.3.1). They also occur systematically in association with the negative modality marker *be/bi* (see §8.2.3.2). With the standard negation marker *sba-*, they can mark hypothetical situations (see §8.2.3.3).

Irrealis subject indexes have not been attested with the second- and third-order prefixes *r-* 'SBQT', *mjë-* 'IMM.PST' and *mas-* 'NEC'. Only one (elicited) example was recorded with the immediate past marker *madr-* (8.26d in §8.2.3.1). Irrealis indexes have also been attested with the future prefix *bar-* as in (8.3a) in §8.1 and (8.26e) in §8.2.3.1.

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[91] In Lamap and Uluveu there are future/irrealis subject indexes, which are characterised by the vowel /i/. This suggests that these forms are historically related to Ahamb's irrealis forms.

Irrealis subject indexes are often used to form interrogatives. Polar interrogatives are illustrated in (8.26a-d) and constituent interrogatives are shown in (8.26e-g). Interrogatives are discussed in detail in §9.3.

(8.26) a. ***Ki**-kan   nog?*
            2SG.IRR-eat   already
            'Did you already eat?' [201-143]

       b. *Nari   **i**-sba-haj   hayug?*
            thing   3SG.IRR-NEG-eat   2SG
            'Did the thing [the shark] not bite you?' [36-58]

       c. ***Gu**-palong   drës   mi?*
            2SG.IRR-want   INDF   again
            'Do you want another one?' [97-207]

       d. ***Ki-madr**-gmay   ne   je   **ki**-gmay   nga-blav   nog?*
            2SG.IRR-IMM.PST-come   LIM   or   2SG.IRR-come   3SG-be.long   already
            'Did you just arrive or did you come a long time ago?' [234-25]

       e. *Hayvur   **i-bar**-korkor   **say**   van?*
            old.man   3SG.IRR-FUT-do   what   go
            'What is the old man going to do [now]?' [19-13]

       f. ***I**-rohroh   a   **bi**?*
            3SG.IRR-stay   LOC   where
            'Where is it?' [201-269]

       g. *A   tata   s-am   a   nana   s-am*
            PERS   father   POSS.GNR-2SG   PERS   mother   POSS.GNR-2SG

           ***ri**-van   vi   **bi**?*
            3DU.IRR-go   go.to   where
            'Where did your mother and father go?' [39-60]

Irrealis subject indexes are not compulsory with interrogatives in Ahamb. Example (8.27) shows an interrogative which is semantically identical to the clause in (8.26f) above, but with a neutral subject index.

(8.27) ***Nga**-rohroh   a   bi?*
            3SG-stay   LOC   where
            'Where is it?' [201-270]

8.2.3.2 Irrealis indexes with be/bi 'NEGMOD'

Irrealis indexes co-occur with the negative modality marker *be/bi*. This morpheme is positioned at the left edge of the verb complex, and it is used to express a number of different moods that have a negative meaning and are related to hypothetical events (see §10.4). When used in such way, *bi/be* is followed by a verb marked with an irrealis index. The examples in (8.28) demonstrate this use. The clause in example (8.28a) expresses impossibility, in (8.28b) it is a prohibition and in (8.28c) the speaker is referring to a distant past when people avoided accepting food from others than close relatives, for fear of sorcery.

(8.28) a. ***Be***   *miri-rohroh*   *mi.*
          NEGMOD   1DU.EXCL.IRR-stay   again
          'We two can no longer stay.' [116-73]

     b. ***Bi***   *gu-gmay*   *drov*   *nalikalim*   *sa*   *swo-m,*
          NEGMOD   2SG.IRR-come   close   house   CLF.GNR   spouse-2SG

          be   *gu-gmay*   *rës*   *napnevër*   *s-am.*
          NEGMOD   1SG.IRR-come   see   woman   POSS.GNR-2SG
          'You cannot come close to your spouse's house, you may not see your wife.' [60-152]

     c. *Lön*   *naur*   *gamuj*   ***be***   *gu-kan*   *blar.*
          LOCP   time   past   NEGMOD   2SG.IRR-eat   everywhere
          'In the past, you couldn't eat just anywhere.' [19-50]

8.2.3.3 Irrealis indexes with sba- 'NEG'

Irrealis subject indexes can be combined with standard negation *sba-* to negate a perceived expectation on the part of the addressee:

(8.29) a. *Naus*   ***i-sba-us.***
          rain   3SG.IRR-NEG-rain
          'It did not rain [although we expected it to and built shelters specifically for that purpose.]' [3-82]

     b. ***I-sba-gan***   *na-r-lös*   *aha.*
          3SG.IRR-NEG-be.like   1SG-SBQT-bathe   here
          'It's not like I am going to bathe here.
          (i.e. This is not a good swimming spot).' [201-171]

     c. ***I-sba-vuy***   *hën*   *parëgin*   *bël...*
          3SG.IRR-NEG-be.good   GNRP   laplap.making   but
          'It [the banana] is not good for making laplap but [it is good for]...' [85-20]

Similar forms with the stative verb *blav* 'to be long' are lexicalised with the meaning 'soon, before long' and are commonly used in the beginning of a sentence in storytelling:

(8.30) a. *I-sba-blav...*
            3SG.IRR-NEG-be.long
            'Before long...'

        b. *I-sba-ro-blav...*
            3SG.IRR-NEG-IPFV-be.long
            'Before long...'

8.3   Fourth-order prefix *va-* 'GO'

The fourth-order prefix *va-* expresses an intention to perform an action, the initiation/beginning of an action or prior motion away from the deictic centre. *Va-* appears to be related to the verb *van* 'go'.[92] It is likely that *va-* emerged from nuclear serial verb constructions where *van* 'go' was the first verb (see §11.2.1).[93] *Van* has been reduced phonologically to *va-* and is beginning to grammaticalise, although in most examples the lexical meaning 'go' is relevant. It is glossed 'GO' to distinguish this reduced morpheme from the fully lexical verb *van* 'go'. *Va-* can appear with subject indexes of all three paradigms and can be preceded by second- and third-order prefixes. It also commonly co-occurs with the fifth-order imperfective marker *ro-* (see §8.4)

The most salient meaning of *va-* is often that of physical movement towards a place where an action is to be performed, normally away from the deictic centre (8.31a-c). When *va-* expresses a process of movement, the movement and the action constitute one event package. *Va-* often marks the second or subsequent predicates in sequential event constructions (see §13.3), where the first verb is *van* 'go, walk' (as in 8.31d).

(8.31) a. *Ka-**va**-lös!*
            2SG-GO-bathe
            'Go bathe!' [201-110]

        b. *Bi   driti-**va**-swah   urën.*
            NEGMOD   1PL.INCL.IRR-GO-hide   there
            'We cannot go hide there.' [103-17]

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[92] Motion away from the deictic centre (source) is also commonly expressed with *van* either in a sequential event construction (in which case it often co-occurs with *va-*, §13.3.5) or with *van* as a deictic marker (§9.2.8).

[93] There is evidence from other Vanuatu languages, such as Vatlogos, where a verb meaning 'go' appears as the first verb in serial verb constructions to denote prior motion (Ridge 2019: 271; 2020)

c. *Mta-varus* ***va*-rohroh** *lön* *nvar* *iha.*
2PL-paddle GO-stay LOCP stone PROX
'You paddle [the canoe] and go stand on this stone. [12-15]

d. *Nga-**van*** *nge-r-**va**-rs* *nagaw.*
3SG-go 3SG.SEC-SBQT-GO-see spider
'He goes and sees the spider.' [103-7]

In some examples with *va-*, its meaning appears to be that of initiation/beginning of the action (8.32a-c) where *va-* has an inchoative function.

(8.32) a. *...mere-r-**va**-jarpoh* *lön* *likalim.*
1DU.INCL.SEC-SBQT-GO-appear LOCP house
'…then we are reaching the house.' [91-33]

b. *Nren* *aven* *nga-**va**-van* *a* *ur* *gmay.*
man INDF.ART 3SG-GO-go LOC mainland come
'A man comes from the mainland.' [39-20]

c. *Nga-**va**-rwag.*
3SG-GO-stand.up
'She is standing up.' [115-68]

Va- follows the standard negator *sba-* to express a meaning of lack of intention or desire:

(8.33) *Ajba-**va**-prag-ni* *mi.*
3PL.NEG-GO-make-OBJ again
'They no longer intend to do it.' [58-111]

Va- appears relatively frequently in the corpus, approximately once every 100 words. It co-occurs with different second- and third-order prefixes. An example of *va-* preceded by the standard negator was given in (8.33). Examples of *va-* preceded by *r-* 'SBQT', *bar-* 'FUT' and *mjë-* 'IMM.PST' can be found in (8.3) in §8.1. An example with *va-* preceded by *mas-* 'NEC' is given in (8.34).

(8.34) *Drata-mas-**va**-rs* *nvulkeno.*
1PL.INCL-NEC-GO-see volcano
'We must go see the volcano.' [108-118]

Va- is only used with active verbs and cannot occur with stative verbs in the sense of 'become', as the otherwise functionally similar Bislama auxiliary *go* (Crowley 2004: 101).

8.4   Fifth-order prefix *ro-* 'IPFV'

The fifth-order prefix *ro-* expresses the imperfective aspect. The examples in (8.35) demonstrate its use. *Ro-* is mainly used to express a continuous action (8.35a-d) or a habitual action (8.35e-g). *Ro-* is most commonly attested with the neutral subject indexes, but it can also occur with sequential event subject indexes (8.35c) and irrealis indexes (8.35d,g).

(8.35) a. *Drato   drata-**ro**-gurgur   tarven   naur   Yesu   nga-gmay.*
            1PL.INCL   1PL.INCL-IPFV-prepare   until   time   Jesus   3SG-come
            'We are preparing for the time when Jesus comes.' [104-30]

        b. *Mata-**ro**-bbüns   nalidumdum   ili.*
            1PL.EXCL-IPFV-watch   whale   ANA
            'We are watching the whale.' [79-39]

        c. *...mjëg   nge-**ro**-rang*
            then   3SG.SEC-IPFV-cry
            '…then she was crying and crying.' [25-96]

        d. *Ki-**ro**-ruru   vi   a   im?*
            2SG.IRR-IPFV-return   go.to   LOC   village
            'Are you going back to the village?' [201-130]

        e. *Mangure   nga-**ro**-kan   limarog   nga-**ro**-paj   ur   mtas.*
            flying.fox   3SG-IPFV-feed   night   3SG-IPFV-sleep   time   daylight
            'The flying fox feeds at night and sleeps during the day.' [106-8]

        f. *naur   aven   ta-**ro**-mün   namelhudr   lön*
            place   REL   3PL-IPFV-drink   kava   LOCP
            'the place where people drink kava' [91-22]

        g. *Mru   mri-**ro**-paj   a   bi?*
            2DU   2DU.IRR-IPFV-sleep   LOC   where
            'Where do you live?' (Lit. 'Where do you normally sleep?') [18.1-213]

Normally *ro-* modifies active verbs. Less commonly, *ro-* has been attested with stative verbs to express a change in state as in (8.36a-b) (see also §7.2.3). Besides, it can spread to a stative

verb in a clause where a habitual action is described, as in the sentence in (8.36c), which is taken from a procedural text.

(8.36) a. *Nras   nga-**ro**-leb.*
        sea   3SG-IPFV-be.big
        'The sea waves became bigger (i.e. the waves became higher).' [257-11]

        b. *Bak   maru   nga-**ro**-lugus.*
        bag   copra   3SG-IPFV-be.many
        'The number of copra bags is growing.' [4.2-9]

        c. *Mata-ro-vi   ru-ru,   vi   rü-rür   lön*
        1PL.EXCL-IPFV-COP   DUP-be.two   COP   DUP-be.three   LOCP

        *narog   nga-**ro**-jkenene.*
        laplap   3SG-IPFV-be.one
        'We normally are (=work) in groups of two, or three per each laplap.' [73-17]

Ro- regularly co-occurs with other prefixed modifiers. Examples with *ro-* preceded by *va-* 'GO', *r-* 'SBQT' and *mjë-* 'IMM.PST' were listed (8.3a-b) in §8.1. When preceded by a prefix ending in a trill as in (8.37a-b), the /r/ sound in *ro-* undergoes syncope (see §2.5.3.4).

(8.37) a. *Kë-**bar-ro**-pen   man   ur   ngel ki-ha   ne.*
        2SG-FUT-IPFV-shoot   bird   place NSG   DIM-PROX   LIM
        'You are only going to be shooting birds here in the vicinity.' [8-80]

        b. *Na-**madr-ro**-prag-ni.*
        1SG-IMM.PST-IPFV-do-OBJ
        'I was just doing it.' [98-221]

Ro- is likely a grammaticalisation of *roh* 'stay, be located', which can also be used as a deictic marker (see §9.2.8). This assumed diachronic process is thus similar to that of the grammaticalisation of *van* 'go' to *va-* 'GO' (see §8.3). However, the process of grammaticalisation of *ro-* appears to be more advanced than that of *va-*, since the meaning of *ro-* does not overlap as much with the meaning of its verbal counterpart, as in the case of *va-*. *Ro-* co-occurs with *roh* where *roh* can be the first verb in sequential event constructions (see §13.3.1) and unmarked sequential event clauses (see §13.3.5), often in its reduplicated form *rohroh*. *Roh* can also appear as a deictic marker where the main verb is modified by *ro-*, to emphasise the length of duration of the action, as in (8.38):

(8.38) a. *Ata-**ro**-suswah* ***roh***   *Lipangpang*
            3PL-IPFV-hide   be.located   L.
            'They hid at Lipangpang for a while.' [32-23]

Ro- is very commonly used, occurring approximately once every 60 words in the corpus.

8.5   Post-verbal adverbs

There is a subset of the class of adverbs (see §9.2.7), whose members can appear between the verb stem and the object pro-index (in which case the object pro-index takes the default form *ni*, see §8.6). Such adverbs are referred to here as *post-verbal adverbs.* Since the object pro-index constitutes the right edge of the verb complex, these adverbs can appear within the verb complex and are therefore discussed in this section. A list of the adverbs that have been attested in post-verbal position is given in (8.39).

(8.39) | Adverbs that can appear inside the verb complex (post-verbal adverbs) | | |
|---|---|---|
| adverb | gloss | comment |
| *blar* | 'everywhere, all over; always, all the time' | |
| *ganha* | 'like this' | < *gan*_{INTR} 'be like this, bear resemblance to' + *ha* 'PROX'. *Gan* and *ganha* can also be used as fillers. |
| *habat* | 'very, much' | |
| *mdra(w)* | 'little' | |
| *par* | 'already' | less commonly functions as a quantifier 'all, every' (see §4.9) |
| *(të)tas* | 'again' | Commonly co-occurs with *mi* 'again', which cannot appear inside the verb complex. |

The use of post-verbal adverbs before an object pro-index is demonstrated in (8.40). Other examples with *habat, mdraw* and *tas* used inside a verb complex are given in §8.6.

(8.40) a. *Jba-ro-prag*   ***blar***   *ni.*
            3PL.NEG-IPFV-do   always   OBJ
            'They do not do this at all times.' [112-53]

        b. *Na-r-prag*   ***ganha***   *ni.*
            1SG-SBQT-do   like.this   OBJ
            'I do it like this.' [17-60]

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c. *Ajba-palong* ***habat*** *ni.*
3PL.NEG-like   much   OBJ
'They don't like it much.' [7-85]

d. *Mata-hurhur* ***mdraw*** *ni.*
1PL.EXCL-clean   little   OBJ
'We clean it a little.' [57-320]

e. *Na-bët* ***par*** *ni.*
1SG-bend   already   OBJ
'I (already) bent it.' [4-18]

f. *Nga-pësah* ***tas*** *ni* *vis-en* *a* *hayvur* ***mi.***
3SG-give   again   OBJ   to-CNSTR   PERS   old.man   again
'He will give it [back] again to the old man.' [89-7]

When it appears before the object pro-index, *tas* 'again' is always attested together with its synonym *mi* 'again', which usually appears at the end of the clause as in (8.40f) above (see §9.2.7 for further discussion of the co-occurrence of *mi* and *tas*). When the object is nominal, however, *mi* does not appear to be compulsory, as illustrated in (8.41a-b). Examples (8.41c-d) demonstrate the use of other post-verbal adverbs before a nominal object.

(8.41)   a. *Nga-kay* ***tas*** *nabe* *ki-li.*
3SG-sing   again   song   DIM-ANA
'He sang this short song again.' [40-149]

b. *Nga-husür* ***tas*** *naser* *s-en.*
3SG-follow   again   road   POSS.GNR-3SG
'He is on his way again.' [46-66]

c. *Nga-tamës* ***habat*** *nmaru.*
3SG-hit   much   coconut
'It [the cyclone] broke many of our coconut palms.' [1-16]

d. *Nhasu* *nga-han* ***par*** *nkanin* *ha-mato.*
rat   3SG-eat   already   food   CLF.ALIM-1PL.EXCL
'The rat already ate our food.' [111-45]

When they appear between the verb stem and the object, post-verbal adverbs are functionally reminiscent of a second verb of a nuclear serial verb construction (see §11.2.1). However, they cannot take verbal modifiers or function as the lexical head of a simple clause in order to be treated as prototypical verbs. In Ahamb, there is a special class of *coverbs*, which do not

function as prototypical verbs and appear in the second verb slot of nuclear serialisation-like constructions (see §11.2.2). Post-verbal adverbs differ from coverbs in that they can also appear outside of the verb complex with the same meaning, as illustrated in (8.42). A general discussion of adverbs in Ahamb can be found in §9.2.7. The difference between coverbs and adverbs is further discussed in §11.2.2.2.

(8.42) *Na-prag-ni* **ganha**.
      1SG-do-OBJ like.this
      'I do it like this.' [92-81]

The following subsection discusses object pro-indexes and gives examples of how their form is influenced by the presence or absence of an adverb between the verb and the object pro-index.

8.6   Object pro-indexes

In Ahamb, object pro-indexes encode a third-person pronominal object of verbs. The form and function of object pro-indexes were discussed in detail in §7.3 where verbs that appear with the different suffixed object pro-indexes (*-ni, -i, -e, -o*) were listed and the morphophonological processes associated with them were explained.

The object pro-index in Ahamb is generally treated as a bound morpheme, since it can be involved in morphophonological process with the stem it is attached to. However, when an adverb appears between the stem and the object pro-index, the object pro-index behaves as a free morph and always takes the form *ni.* The examples in (8.43) demonstrate this. In (8.43a), the verb takes the suffixed object pro-index *-ni* which appears in the same form, but separately from the stem when the adverb *habat* is inserted between them, as in example (8.43b). However, in (8.43c,e), the verbs take the suffixed object pro-indexes *-i* and *-e* respectively, but when an adverb appears after the verb stem, as in (8.43d,f), the object pro-index is freestanding and takes the form *ni.* The o~u vowel alternation in the stem of the verb in (8.43e) is only triggered by the suffixed object pro-index *-e* (see §2.5.7, 7.3.3). Example (8.43e) also demonstrates the use of an object pro-index in association with a fronted nominal object.

(8.43) a. *Ta-r-**prag-ni.***
         3PL-SBQT-make-OBJ
         'They will make it.' [7-91]

b. *Mëjba-**prag***   ***habat**   **ni**   mi.*
    1PL.EXCL.NEG-make   much   OBJ   again
    'We do not normally make it anymore.' [61-141]

c. *Dra-**hurhur-i.***
    1DU.INCL-clean-OBJ
    'We clean it.' [88-57]

d. *Mata-**hurhur**   **mdraw**   **ni.***
    1PL.EXCL-clean   little   OBJ
    'We cleaned it a little bit.' [57-320]

e. *Naviren*[94]   *drata-**ruv-e**   par.*
    fishing pool   1PL.INCL-block-OBJ   QNT
    'We blocked all the fishing pools.' [112-10]

f. *Mata-**rov**   **tas**   **ni**   mi   drwan   var.*
    1PL.EXCL-block   again   OBJ   again   with   stone
    'We cover it again with stones.' [73-41]

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[94] *Naviren* refers to pools of seawater that form on the reef at low tide, where fish are trapped and can be more easily caught. As the tide retreats, fishermen use rocks to block the gaps around such pools to prevent the fish from escaping.

CHAPTER 9.   THE SIMPLE CLAUSE

9.1   Introduction to Ahamb's clause types

Most clauses in Ahamb contain a verb. A clause in Ahamb can be formed by a verb complex on its own, a verb complex with nominal argument(s) with or without additional peripheral material, or it can involve more than one predicate. A single predicate in Ahamb can contain more than one verb. Such verb sequences can be organised around different frames in Ahamb.

The current chapter and the following four chapters look at Ahamb's clauses. The sections in this chapter deal with the structure of the simple clause with a focus on simple (one-verb) predicates and describes in detail the periphery of simple clauses. Negation, which can be encoded in a variety of ways (in a number of positions both within and outside of the verb complex) to express different grammatical categories, is covered in Chapter 10.

The remainder of the chapters deal with clauses with more than one verb. The chapters are organised primarily according to the tightness of the juncture between the verbs or predicates. The terminology used in these chapters is derived from the literature on Oceanic languages or Vanuatu languages in particular and occasionally from the wider typological literature.

In a typological overview of clause structure, Payne (2006: 288-289) proposes a "continuum of grammatical integration" between the verbs within a clause, where a simple clause with a single verb is at the leftmost extreme of the continuum (as the tightest possible "juncture") and two separate clauses at the rightmost edge of the continuum (where there is no juncture between any elements of the clauses).

Figure 9-1 proposes an ordering of Ahamb's constructions with more than one verb (or with more than one predicate) along a continuum of tightness of juncture that is Ahamb-specific. Determining the degree of juncture for two different kinds of constructions is not always straightforward. The guiding principles used here are: (1) contiguity of components – whether the verbs need to be next to each other or some other constituents may intervene between them, (2) grammatical integration – what grammatical devices are used to mark the juncture between the verbs, and (3) how closely integrated the verbs are semantically, that is whether they express a single event or a series of events (or a series of events that can be grouped within a single event package). The last criterion is an expansion on Payne's proposed continuum, which only considers grammatical integration. These criteria have been

discussed in the literature on multi-verb constructions[95] such as serial verbs (Aikhenvald 2006; Haspelmath 2016).

tighter juncture   looser juncture

Simple clause with one verb (this chapter)	Serial verb constructions (SVCs)		Complementation (including direct and indirect speech) (Chapter 12)	Relative clauses (§4.6)	Adverbial subordination (§13.2)	Sequential event constructions (SECs) (§13.3)	Coordination (§13.4)
	Nuclear SVCs (§11.2), incl. Coverbal SVCs (§11.2.2)	Core SVCs, (Switch-function SVCs (§11.3.1) & Ambient SVCs (§11.3.2))					

Figure 9-1. Continuum of integration between the verbs in clauses in Ahamb

This chapter describes the structure of simple clauses in Ahamb. The basic constituent order in Ahamb is SVO. Subjects can be expressed by a noun phrase or a subject index or a combination of the two. Less commonly, the subject can be unmarked when it is clear from the context. Direct objects can be expressed by a noun phrase (including personal pronouns) or an object pro-index, which refers to a third-person pronominal object. A detailed description of the different subject indexes and object pro-indexes, and their form and function, can be found in §8.2 and §8.6 respectively; noun phrases are discussed in Chapter 6.

Verb nuclei can consist of a simplex verb or a nuclear SVC (see §11.2).

Modification of the verb can be coded within the verb complex (Chapter 8). Peripheral constituents are prototypically expressed by adverbs, prepositional phrases or noun phrases.

This chapter starts with a description of simple clauses involving different types of verbs. Then peripheral constituents (including adverbs and prepositional phrases) are described in

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[95] The term "multi-verb construction" has been used increasingly in the typological literature as an umbrella term to refer to serialisation-like constructions, including serial verbs, coverbs, preverbs etc. (see e.g. Aikhenvald 2011; Unterladstetter 2020).

more detail. This is followed by sections on the different types of clauses according to their function.

9.2 The structure of simple verbal clauses

This section deals with the basic structure of verbal clauses and is organised according to the type of verb (see Chapter 7 for verb classification) – intransitive, transitive and the copula. As discussed in §7.6, some Ahamb verbs can take three arguments, where one argument is normally introduced by a preposition. Such arguments are discussed in §§9.2.5.2, 9.2.5.3.

9.2.1 Simple clauses with single-argument (intransitive) verbs

9.2.1.1 Subject encoding

Intransitive verbs take a single argument that is the syntactic subject. The examples in (9.1) demonstrate how subjects can be coded. A subject can be expressed by a noun phrase (9.1a), a subject index on its own (when the subject is clear from the context) (9.1b) or, very commonly, by a combination of the two (9.1c-d). It is uncommon for the verb to appear without a subject index. In some types of clauses with multiple verbs, a verb can appear without any subject marking when the subject has been marked on a preceding verb (see §8.1 for an example), including in unmarked sequential constructions (see §13.3.5).

(9.1) a. ***Sema*** *paj.*
           S.   sleep.
           'Sema is sleeping.' [201-333]

       b. ***Na****-kan*   *nog.*
           1SG-eat   already
           'I already ate.' [201-138]

       c. ***Mato***   ***mata****-van.*
           1PL.EXCL   1PL.EXCL-go
           'We left.' [89-34]

       d. ***Nren*** ***ngail*** ***ta****-ro-gas.*
           man   NSG   3PL-IPFV-work
           'The men are working.' [51-67]

9.2.1.2 *Meteorological and related expressions*

A number of stative verbs that are related to meteorological phenomena and related environmental phenomena, take a subject in the form of *naur* 'place'[96] followed by the verb with a third-person singular index.[97]

(9.2)   a.   *Naur   nga-süsmel.*
              place   3SG-be.cold
              'It is cold.' [201-57]

        b.   *Naur   nga-püdrpüdr.*
              place   3SG-be.hot
              'It is hot.' [253-3]

        c.   *Naur   nga-ppër.*
              place   3SG-be.cold
              'It is cold.' [201-261]

        d.   *Naur   nga-mes.*
              place   3SG-be.dry
              'It is dry (= It hasn't rained for a while).' [3-84]

Some meteorological and related expressions can also be built using a conventional subject + verb sequence:

(9.3)   a.   *Naus   nga-us.*
              rain   3SG-rain
              'It is raining.' [98-353]

        b.   *Nadru   nga-dru.*
              earthquake 3SG-shake
              'The earthquake hits.' [3-142]

        c.   *Niar   nga-tün.*
              sun   3SG-shine
              'The sun shines.' [97-79]

        d.   *Nrang   nga-uv.*
              wind   3SG-blow
              'The wind blows.' [53-62]

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[96] Note that the word *(na)ur,* as a common noun, normally appears with or without *na*-accretion. However, in this function it always appears with accretion.

[97] This type of expressions have counterparts in Bislama (Crowley 2004: 118).

It is possible to add an experiencer to a meteorological expression as a direct object, thus increasing the valency of the verb.

(9.4) *Naur   nga-ppër   ahnaw.*
      place   3SG-be.cold   1SG
      'I am cold.' [56-101]

Expressions relating to times of the day can appear in identical constructions with the most common examples listed in (9.5).

(9.5) a. *Naur   nga-ponpon.*
         place   3SG-be.dusk
         'Dusk is falling.' [24-31]

      b. *Naur   nga-mtas.*
         place   3SG-be.bright
         'Dawn is breaking.' [20-33]

The words *ponpon* and *mtas* in the examples in (9.5) can also function as local temporal nouns meaning 'dusk' and 'dawn' respectively. They can modify the common noun *naur*, just as other local nouns can (see §3.5.4) to create common noun phrases with temporal meaning: '(at) dusk/dawn'. The meteorological verbs in (9.2) above normally do not have such nominal counterparts. The only exception is *naur ppër* 'cold(ness)', which can be used as a noun as in (9.6). In this case *ppër* appears to be modifying *naur* as local nouns do.

(9.6) *Naur   ppër   nga-soh   ahnaw.*
      place   cold   3SG-reach   1SG
      'I got cold.' [48-105]

Local nouns referring to times of the day can also be involved in constructions with *naur* as subject, but with the help of the copula *vi* 'be, become', as in the examples in (9.7). Structurally, these are transitive constructions, but they are semantically related to the constructions discussed above.

(9.7) a. *Naur   nga-vi   limarog.*
         place   3SG-become   night
         'Night is falling.' [72-90]

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b. *Naur   nga-vi   tuhrav   mdraw.*
   place   3SG-become   afternoon   little
   'It is the beginning of the afternoon.' [72-5]

9.2.2 Simple clauses with two-argument (transitive) verbs

Transitive verbs take two arguments – a subject and an object. The subject can be encoded in the same way as with intransitive verbs. In (9.8a), the subject is marked by a subject index on its own. In (9.8b,c), the subject is marked both by a noun phrase and a subject index. The object can be expressed by either a noun phrase (9.8a,c) or an object pro-index (9.8b).

(9.8) a. ***Ata**-han   **narog**   ili.*
       3PL-eat   laplap   ANA
       'They ate the laplap.' [41-44]

     b. ***Mto**   **mta**-r-han-**i**.*
        2PL   2PL-SBQT-eat-OBJ
        'You eat it.' [41-46]

     c. ***Taso   ki-li***   *nga-tabo   **dram   ili**.*
        Taso   DIM-ANA   3SG-hug   yam   ANA
        'Little Taso was hugging the yam.' [44-44]

9.2.3 Copula

Ahamb has a copula verb *vi*, which links the subject to a predicative expression. *Vi* with a third-person singular subject index is used to introduce a sentence, just as "it is..." in English, as shown in (9.9d).

(9.9) a. *Gamuj   naur   vër   in   nga-**vi**   naliur.*
       past   place   reef   DIST   3SG-COP   small.island
       'In the past that reef was an island.' [25-9]

     b. *Nakenarënin   s-aru   nga-**vi**   narbaruh.*
        child   POSS.GNR-3DU   3SG-COP   girl
        'Their child is a girl.' [46-5]

     c. *Hana   na-**vi**   nren   naur   Ahamb.*
        1SG   1SG-COP   man   place   A.
        'I am an Ahamb man.' [70-4]

d. *Nga-**vi*** *nrang tamës* *aven* *nga-leb* *habat.*
   3SG-COP cyclone REL 3SG-be.big much
   'It was a very big cyclone.'
   (Lit. 'It was a cyclone that was very big.') [1-20]

There are two phrasemes that involve the copula and have somewhat idiomatic meaning: *ngavi mrahin* (lit. 'it is a scary thing') is used to emphasise a quality that is unusual, as the size/number of the reefs in example (9.10a), which can be translated into English with the colloquial "crazy/out of this world". The other phrase, *ngavi pragin*, means 'it is [a lot of] work' and is used to denote that an activity is difficult, time consuming or hardly possible, as in (9.10b).

(9.10) a. *Nabeshaw* *naur* *ngel-ën* ***nga-vi*** ***mrahin.***
        reef place NSG-DIST 3SG-COP scary.thing
        'The [size/number of] reefs there is crazy.' [6-19]

        b. *Jijimaruin* ***nga-vi*** ***pragin.***
        Shelling.out.copra 3SG-COP work
        'Shelling out copra is hard work.' [111-119]

Vi can also be used to introduce borrowed numerals. Indigenous numerals act as stative verbs and take a subject index (see §4.10). When borrowed numerals are used, speakers often introduce them with the copula *vi* with a third-person singular subject index:

(9.11) *Ka-r-ngadrsah* *navihuh* ***nga-vi*** *tri.*
        2SG-SBQT-climb hill 3SG-COP three
        'You will climb three hills.' [108-105]

The verb *vi* can denote a change of state in the sense of 'become':

(9.12) a. *Mata-vi* *memba* *hën* *parlamen.*
        1PL.EXCL-become member GNRP parliament
        'We became members of the parliament.' [49-153]

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b. *Naur   nga-vi   tuhrav.*
   place   3SG-become   afternoon
   'It became afternoon.' [18.1-122]

The homophonous verb *vi* 'go to' which is used to express motion, is discussed in §3.5.1.2.

9.2.4   Clausal modifiers

The prototypical simple clause in Ahamb consists of the verb complex and its core arguments. The structure of the verb complex was discussed in detail in Chapter 8 and the core arguments were discussed above in this chapter. In Ahamb, there are some modifiers that are positioned outside of the verb complex and they are described in detail in this section.

9.2.4.1   *Future time lexeme* rohbay

Rohbay is used to refer to an act or state that will be realised in the future. It appears to refer to events that are planned and are expected to occur with a relatively high degree of certainty. Its function is similar to that of the prefixed verb modifier *bar-* (see §8.2.1.2). *Rohbay* normally appears before the verb and any overtly expressed subject (whether pronominal or lexical), as in (9.13a-b). In (9.13c) the subject appearing before *rohbay* is treated as fronted.

(9.13) a. ***Rohbay   hana*** *mi   na-r-vi   dikon.*
            in.future   1SG   again   1SG-SBQT-become   deacon
            'I will become deacon again.' [48-9]

        b. ***Rohbay   nren*** *ta-r-vnah   kava.*
            in.future   man   3PL-SBQT-steal   kava
            'People will steal kava.' [92-65]

        c. ***Nahre   rohbay*** *nga-r-is.*
            boy   in.future   3SG-SBQT-scream
            'The boy will scream.' [75-30]

Adjuncts normally follow the verb complex, but when they are fronted, *rohbay* can precede an adjunct, as in (9.14a), or follow it, as in (9.14b-c).

(9.14) a. *Rohbay* [*lön fraede*] *mara-bar.*
        in.future on Friday 1DU.EXCL-fight
        'We will fight on Friday.' [47-48]

   b. [***Lön fraede***] *rohbay mra-r-bar.*
        on Friday in.future 2DU-SBQT-fight
        'You two will fight on Friday.' [47-59]

   c. ***Kiaha*** *rohbay na-r-sar naih.*
        today in.future 1SG-SBQT-spear fish
        'I am going to spear fish today.' [37.1-145]

Rohbay normally co-occurs with neutral subject indexes and the subsequential prefix *r-* (see §8.2.1.1). A counterexample, without *r-*, can be found in (9.14a).

Rohbay can occur together with the negative modality marker *be/bi* (see §10.4), as in the examples in (9.15). These are the only structures in which *rohbay* occurs with irrealis subject indexes (which are triggered by the use of *be/bi*).

(9.15) a. *Rohbay* ***bi*** *miti-ro-han* *naih mi.*
        in.future NEGMOD 1PL.EXCL.IRR-IPFV-eat fish again
        'We will no longer be able to be eating fish.' [37.1-254]

   b. *Rohbay* ***be*** *ki-prag* *iha.*
        in.future NEGMOD 2SG.IRR-make DEM.PRN
        'You will not be able to make this one.' [7-78]

9.2.4.2 *Expressing duration with* **van** *'go' and* **vane** *'go.LIM'*

The verb *van* can modify active verbs to express an event which lasts or pertains for a relatively long period of time as in (9.16a-b) or an action which is performed repeatedly as in (9.16c), which refers to the action of wrapping pieces of laplap by a laplap seller. Here *van* has continuous function. *Van* normally follows any objects (9.16d) or adjuncts (9.16e). *Van* is used in a similar way to Bislama *gogo* (Crowley 2004: 104). *Van* can be repeated to emphasise the continuity or repetition of the action (see §7.8.2). *Van* is often used in storytelling to express the passage of time. It often follows the verbs *tov* and *(roh)roh* meaning 'live, stay in a place' (9.16a,e).

(9.16) a. *Ata-**tov** **van** **van** **van**.*
           3PL-live go go go
           'They lived for some time.' [25-40]

       b. *Ta-**van** **van** **van** **van** brah nalibëgan.*
           3PL-go go go go reach sand
           'They walked for some time before reaching the beach.' [9-49]

       c. *Mata-habur-i **van** **van** **van**.*
           1PL.EXCL-wrap-OBJ go go go
           'We wrapped them again and again.' [41-41]

       d. *Nga-karkarëv gor [**nabrav** **in**]ₒ **van**.*
           3SG-watch over breadfruit DIST go
           'He was taking care of that breadfruit tree for a long time.' [45-9]

       e. *Nga-rohroh [**drwan** **a** **nana** **s-en***
           3SG-stay with PERS mother POSS.GNR-3SG

           drwan** **a** **tata** **sen**] **van** **van.
           with PERS father POSS.GNR-3SG go go
           'He lived with his mother and father for a long time.' [47-23]

Less commonly, the form *vane* is used to express the same function as *van*. It is likely a combination of *van* and the limiter *ne* (see §4.11).

(9.17) *Nga-prag van nga-hr-i **vane** **vane** **vane**.*
         3SG-do go 3SG-dig-OBJ go.LIM go.LIM go.LIM
         'He did it for some time, he was just digging it for some time.' [25-80]

9.2.4.3   Prohibitive markers **be, jab**

The particle *be* is placed before the verb and *jab* at the end of a clause to form prohibitives. Prohibitives are discussed in detail in §10.3.

(9.18) ***Be** ka-haj hanaw **jab**!*
         PROH1 2SG-eat 1SG PROH2
         'Don't eat me!' [44-89]

9.2.4.4   Intentive mood marker **beay** '*INTENT*'

The particle *beay* can be placed at the end of a clause with an active verb to denote an intent to perform an action (usually in the near future). It is glossed here as intentive mood (INTENT). The sentence in (9.19a) is a response to a perceived urge for the group of people to

follow everyone else on a journey. A sentence with *beay* is commonly a response to a question of whether an action has already been performed. The sentence in (9.19b) is often heard around sunset time on the paths around Ahamb Island, when many men are walking to or from the *nakamal*, where kava is served. It is commonly the response to a question of whether the speaker has already drunk kava. As these examples demonstrate, the particle has a secondary meaning related to negation – it conveys the meaning that the action has not been completed yet, but there is an intent to complete it.

Less commonly, *beay* can be used with stative verbs to denote that an intention, plan, expectation or condition exists for a state to be achieved. An example of such usage is given in (9.19c).

(9.19) a. *Mata-r-varah*   ***beay***.
            1PL.INCL-SBQT-follow   INTENT
            'We intend to follow [you].
            (=We haven't left yet but we will soon).' [30-88]

    b. *Nar-mün*   *kava*   ***beay.***
            1SG-SBQT-drink   kava   INTENT
            'I am about to drink kava.' [233-17]

    c. *Atua*   *nga-visen*   *nagurgurin*   *s-en*   *hën*   *naliur*   *iha*   *hën*
            God   3SG-have   plan   POSS.GNR-3SG   GNRP   island   PROX   in.order.to

           drata-lugus   *mi*   ***beay***.
            1PL.INCL-be.many   again   INTENT
            'God has a plan for this island that there will be many of us again.' [3-123]

9.2.5 Prepositional phrases

The core arguments of the prototypical Ahamb verb are usually its subject and object. In §7.6, some verbs, such as *pësah* 'give', were discussed that allow for additional participants, such as recipient or theme, which are normally expressed through prepositional phrases. Other verbs can attract optional participants such as instruments, location, direction or purpose. This subsection is a discussion of prepositional phrases which in Ahamb are commonly used to encode non-core participants as well as adjuncts. Adverbs and noun phrases that encode temporal and locative adjuncts are discussed in §9.2.7 and §3.5 respectively. In Ahamb, adjuncts are also commonly expressed with subordinate clauses (see §13.2).

There are a number of prepositions in Ahamb that can serve as the heads of prepositional phrases. In other Vanuatu languages, prepositions have been divided in three different types depending on their form and syntactic behaviour: true (invariant) prepositions, verb-like prepositions and noun-like prepositions (e.g. Hyslop 2001: 134; Barbour 2012: 270). In Ahamb, there are prepositions of all three types. Table 9-1 lists all prepositions that have been attested in Ahamb with specifications of subclass. Some prepositional phrases that may be treated as grammaticalised complex prepositions are described in §§9.2.5.1, 9.2.5.4.

Table 9-1. Prepositions

type	preposition	meaning
true	*lön*	'on, in, at, for' (various functions; glossed as LOCP)
	rben	'because of'
	ur	'because of'
	pen	'with' (confective[98])
	pevën	'underneath'
	tarven	'until, while (waiting for)'
	mhay	'for' (benefactive)
verb-like	*hën(-i)*	'to (recipient, purpose), of (associative), because of…' (various functions, glossed as GNRP – general preposition)
	drwan(-i)	'with' (comitative, confective)
	dran(-i)	'away from'
	drov (druv-e)	'close to'
	rov (ruv-e)	'close to'
	perjag(-ni)	'close to'
	gor (gur-e)	'over, around' (semantically related to the verbal meaning 'cover, block'), see §11.2.2.1.
noun-like	*vis-en*	'to (dative), for (benefactive)'
	madrë-n	'behind'

As mentioned earlier, true prepositions cannot take any inflection. The verb-like prepositions behave like verbs in the sense that they can take an object pro-index when their pronominal object is in the third person. The object pro-index forms are given in brackets in Table 9-1. The connection between coverbs and verb-like prepositions is discussed in §11.2.2.1. The two noun-like prepositions behave syntactically like inalienable nouns. They come with a compulsory possessive suffix (when the object is singular and pronominal) or construct suffix (when the object is an NP). A discussion of all prepositions with some examples follows.

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[98] In the literature on Vanuatu languages, this function has been termed *confective* (e.g. Hyslop 2001: 99) or *accompanitive* (e.g. Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 647, 654, 716).

9.2.5.1 True prepositions

True prepositions do not inflect to encode their object.[99] Instead, they only allow for an object in the form of a noun phrase with a personal pronoun or a noun as its head. When the prepositional object is contextually retrievable, the object position can be left empty. This is commonly observed in relative clauses where the object of a true preposition refers to the relative clause's head (see §4.6.3), or in clauses where the object is fronted (see §8.6). The structure of the prepositional phrase with a true preposition can be summarised as in (9.20):

(9.20) | PP → Preposition (+ NP)

- **_Lön_ 'LOCP'**

Lön is a very commonly used preposition in Ahamb. It is one of the most versatile prepositions in the language (together with _hën_) and it has several different functions. _Lön_ is most commonly used to introduce objects denoting a spatial or temporal location. Examples (9.21) demonstrate temporal and locative phrases introduced by _lön. Lön_ can take common nouns as objects but it does not introduce local nouns, which normally form temporal/locative phrases without a preposition (see §§3.5, 9.2.6).

(9.21) a. _Mata-ro-prag-ni_   **_lön_**   _nabong_   _ngail_   _parne._
            1PL.EXCL-IPFV-make-OBJ   LOCP   day   NSG   QNT
            'We do it every day.' [7-4]

        b. _Ta-ro-prag_   _gasin_   _s-ato_   **_lön_**   _nalikalim_   _ngail._
            2PL-IPFV-do   work   POSS.GNR-3PL   LOCP   house   NSG
            'They are doing their work inside the houses.' [57-82]

        c. _Ta-tov_   _roh_   **_lön_**   _naliur._
            3PL-stay   be.located   LOCP   island
            'They stayed on the island.' [3-79]

In example (9.22), _lön_ appears in a relative clause and its object refers to the head; hence the object trace is empty (see also §4.6.3).

(9.22) _Naben_   _iha_   _aven_   _na-subb_   _roh_   **_lön._**
        mat   PROX   REL   1SG-sit   be.located   LOCP

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[99] It is worth noting that 5 out of the 7 true prepositions end in /n/, suggesting that these forms may have historically involved suffixation (John Lynch, pers.comm.).

'This mat that I am sitting on.' [27-116]

Locative phrases denoting destination of movement which take common nouns as objects are also introduced by *lön*, which is preceded by *vi* 'go to',[100] which commonly marks destination of movement (see §3.5.1.2). The examples in (9.23) demonstrate this use. In (9.23a-c), the location that is the destination of movement is expressed by a noun phrase, introduced by *lön*. In (9.23d) the object slot is empty because it is retrievable from the context – the coconut milk is squeezed into a pot of cooked bananas that was mentioned earlier in the discourse. The sequence *vi lön* can also introduce an object with a semantic role that is similar to a destination. In (9.23e) *vi lön* is used to denote a recipient. In (9.23f) the destination is a point in time rather than space and in (9.23g) the destination is an abstract noun that denotes the result of a change of affairs.

(9.23) a. *Ata-van   **vi   lön**   nalikalim   s-ato.*
           3PL-go   go.to   LOCP   house   POSS.GNR-3PL
           'They go to their house.' [44-108]

        b. *Mata-**vi**   **lön**   trak.*
           1PL.EXCL-go.to   LOCP   truck
           'We entered the truck.' [20-65]

        c. *Na-mrah   **vi**   **lön**   nwog   s-en.*
           1SG-jump   go.to   LOCP   canoe   POSS.GNR-3SG
           'I jumped into his canoe.' [36-62]

        d. *Na-ppus   van   **vi**   **lön.***
           1SG-squeeze.coconut.milk   go   go.to   LOCP
           'I squeezed coconut milk onto it [the cooked bananas].' [73-48]

        e. *Nga-drag   **vi**   **lön**   nahre   ki-li.*
           3SG-talk.angrily   go.to   LOCP   boy   DIM-ANA
           'He talked angrily to this young boy.' [25-60]

        f. *Drata-**vi**   **lön**   general election.*
           1PL.INCL-go.to   LOCP   g.e.
           'We moved towards general election.' [49-105]

        g. *Mata-r-jenjem   **vi**   **lön**   dolar   mi.*
           1PL.EXCL-SBQT-change   go.to   LOCP   dollar   again

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[100] Not to be confused with the copula *vi*.

'We changed it [the national currency] to the dollar again.' [49-181]

Lön can also introduce predicative expressions. In (9.24) *lön* combines with the copular verb *vi* to provide locations of non-traditional entities. In (9.24b) *lön* encodes the location of an abstract entity, namely the price of a boat ride.

(9.24) a. *Nga-vi   **lön**   singlit   pangpang.*
    3SG-COP   LOCP   singlet   be.red
    'He is in a red singlet.' [502-38]

   b. *Gamuj   nga-vi   **lön**   1000.*
    before   3SG-COP   LOCP   1000
    'Before it [the price] was at 1000 [vatu].' [107-116]

More specific locative expressions corresponding to English 'inside', 'on top inside of' and 'in the middle of' are expressed by *lön* with the help of common nouns. These phrases involve directly possessed nouns that denote spatial components of entities (see §5.2.4). Such expressions can be treated as *complex prepositions*. They are listed in (9.25) (see §9.2.5.4 for other complex prepositions). The objects of these complex prepositions are NPs that follow them directly, reflecting the direct possessive structures they are normally part of (see §5.2.4), as demonstrated in (9.26).

(9.25)	Locative expressions with *lön*		
	complex preposition	gloss	comment
	lön nabu(bu)run	'inside'	*Nabu(bu)run* is a noun meaning 'inside'.
	lön napon	'on top inside of'[101]	*Napon* is only attested in this construction.
	lön namüsün	'in the middle of'	*Namüsün* is a noun meaning 'middle'.

(9.26) a. *Ta-mas-gmay   jeroh   **lön naburun**   likalim skul.*
    3PL-NEC-come   stay   inside   church
    'They must come and stay inside the church.' [23-99]

   b. *Ka-rëng-i   **lön napon**   bak.*
    2SG-put-OBJ   inside.on.top.of   bag
    'Put it inside the bag.' [238-4]

   c. *Ara-roh   **lön namüsün**   nalihayhay.*

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[101] The use of *lön napon* appears to be restricted to the very specific situation of putting something inside a bag that is almost full, on top of everything else that is inside the bag.

3DU-stay   in.the.middle.of   jungle
'They lived in the middle of the jungle.' [46-2]

Less commonly, *lön* can serve functions that are not related to locations. It can be used to introduce an instrument as in (9.27a-b). The empty object slot after *lön* in (9.27b) refers to the same object of the main clause, which is expressed by the object pro-index *-i*. It refers to a seashell mentioned previously in the discourse. Instruments can also be introduced with the preposition *hën* (see §9.2.5.2). In (9.27c) *lön* introduces a contextually retrievable object, which refers to a local politician, who has run for elections multiple times. In this example, *lön* can be treated as denoting a recipient or beneficiary. The choice of preposition here may depend on the fact that the verb *vot* 'vote' is a borrowing from Bislama, where it is used with the preposition *long*, which Crowley (2004: 130) describes as the "default preposition" in Bislama, meaning that it is the most functionally versatile preposition in that language, just as *lön* is in Ahamb.

(9.27) a.   *…nö-r-jiji*   **lön**   *nari gas iha*   *s-ag.*
            1SG.SEC-SBQT-shell.out   LOCP   tool   PROX   POSS.GNR-1SG
            '…then I shell out with my tool here.' [4-45]

      b.   *Mata-r-tov*   *tun-i*   *hën*   *mata-r-juv*   **lön.**
            1PL.EXCL-SBQT-put   save-OBJ   in.order.to   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-grate   LOCP
            'We will keep it [the shell] to use it for [banana] grating.' [17-19]

      c.   *…aven   drata-vot*   **lön.**
            one   1PL.INCL-vote   LOCP
            '…the one [man] that we vote for.' [3-97]

- **Rben 'because of'**

The preposition *rben* 'because of' can be followed by a noun phrase to denote a reason. The examples in (9.28) demonstrate its use. *Rben* can also function as a subordinator with a similar meaning (see §13.2.2.2).

(9.28) a.   *…nge-r-prag*   *hay ru vanin*   *s-en*   *gmay a   ras*
            3SG.SEC-SBQT-make   second   journey   POSS.GNR-3SG   come   LOC   sea

            rben   *napër*   *in.*
            because.of   diarrhoea   DIST
            '…then he did his second journey to the coast because of the diarrhoea [outbreak].'
            [54-35]

b. *Ka-r-merkaj*   ***rben***   *ange.*
2SG-SBQT-be.hungry   because.of   3SG
'You will go hungry because of him.' [67-44]

- *Ur* **'because of'**

Ur can also denote reason, as shown in (9.29). It is less commonly used in this sense than *rben. Ur* can also function as a subordinator with a similar meaning (see §13.2.2.3).

(9.29)   *Ata-palong-ni*   *ne*   ***ur***   *nagëglenin*   *s-en*   *ne.*
        3PL-like-OBJ   LIM   because.of   colour   POSS.GNR-3SG   LIM
        'They just like it because of its colour.' [7-89]

- *Pen* **(confective relationship)**

Pen means 'with' and has confective function. This means that it can only be used to introduce objects that accompany/are carried by the subject. The examples in (9.30) demonstrate its function. In (9.30c), *pen* is attested with zero object, which is clear from the context.

(9.30)   a.   *Nga-r-gam*   ***pen***   *batuv*   *s-ag.*
             3SG-SBQT-run   with   metal.wire   POSS.GNR-1SG
             'It will escape with my metal wire [used for collecting seafood].' [70-56]

         b.   *Ata-ro-van*   ***pen***   *matmatuin*   *gmay.*
             3PL-IPFV-go   with   power   come
             'They came with power.' [57-23]

         c.   *Mata-tah*   *bahobër*   *lebeli*   *mjëg*   *mete-r-gam*   ***pen***.
             1PL.EXCL-tie   shark   big   then   1PL.EXCL.SEC-SBQT-drive   with
             'We tied the big shark [to the boat] and drove with it.' [79-70]

- *Pevën* **'underneath'**

Pevën means 'underneath'. For the antonym 'above, on top of', the complex preposition *(a) mhar lön* is used (see §9.2.5.4).

(9.31)   *Nkro*   *naih*   *nga-rohroh*   ***pevën***   *nteva.*
        pot   fish   3SG-be.located   underneath   table
        'The fish pot is under the table.' [201-150]

- ***Tarven* 'until, while waiting for'**

The preposition *tarven* can mean 'until', as in (9.31a). Very commonly, it can also mean 'while waiting for' as in (9.31b-c). In such cases, *tarven* semantically resembles a verb (with the meaning 'wait'). However, *tarven* cannot take other verbal morphology, including an object pro-index (as verb-like prepositions do, see §9.2.5.2), as in example (9.31d), where the object of *tarven* is omitted, a characteristic of true prepositions. *Tarven* can also act as a subordinator (see §13.2.1.4).

(9.31) a. *Mata-tov   van **tarven**   3   oklok.*
1PL.EXCL-stay   go   until   3   o'clock
'We stayed until 3 o'clock.' [17.78]

b. *Ta-ro-prag   narog   **tarven**   navisubbin   ata-rür   in.*
3PL-IPFV-make   laplap   until   group.member   3PL-be.three   DIST
'They make laplap while waiting for the three women.' [76-16]

c. *Bi   driti-wet   **tarven**   kampani   naur   Manur.*
NEGMOD   1PL.INCL.IRR-wait   until   group   place   M.
'We cannot wait for the group from Manur.' [71-372]

d. *Drata-r-gurgur   naser   **tarven**.*
1PL.INCL-SBQT-prepare   road   until
'Let's prepare and wait for him (the Master).' [71-372]

- ***Mhay* (benefactive)**

Mhay 'especially to/for' is a rarely used preposition, which has benefactive function.

(9.32) a. *Ka-kur   naser   nga-gurgur   mhay   mato.*
2SG-make   road   3SG-ready   for   1PL.EXCL
'You make the preparations for us.' [28-18]

b. *Nga-porah   mhay   maurin   s-mato.*
3SG-be.born   for   life   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL
'[Jesus] was born for [the purpose of saving] our lives.' [18-19]

c. *...mhay   nahre   ngel   aven   ata-madr-porah*
for   child   NSG-REL   3PL-IMM.PST-be.born
'…for the children who were recently born. [57-429]

9.2.5.2   *Verb-like prepositions*

Verb-like prepositions resemble verbs in that they can take an object pro-index. Unlike verbs, they cannot take prefixed verbal morphology. Unlike coverbs, they can appear outside of the verb nucleus. The connection between coverbs and prepositions is discussed in §11.2.2.1 where the lexeme *gor* is discussed, which best illustrates the grey area between prepositions and coverbs.

When verb-like prepositions take a suffixed object pro-index, it encodes a third-person pronominal object. The form of the object pro-index for the different prepositions was given in Table 9-1. The object is expressed pronominally when it is clear from the context, a nominal object has been fronted or in relative clauses where the co-referential NP functions as the prepositional object within the relative clause (see §4.6.3). Alternatively, the object of verb-like prepositions can be expressed by a noun phrase (including a personal pronoun). The possible structures can be summarised as:

(9.33)

> PP → Preposition-OBJ
>
> PP → Preposition + NP

The subsections below discuss the functions of each preposition and provide examples of their usage.

- *Hën* 'GNRP'

Hën is a very commonly used and versatile preposition, with a number of different functions. The most common function of *hën* is to introduce an object that expresses purpose, reason or beneficiary. The examples in (9.34) demonstrate this function.

(9.34) a. *Rë-bar-pësah-ni*   **hën**   *nappurppurin.*
            3DU-FUT-give-OBJ   GNRP   payment
            'They will use it as payment.' [71-732]

      b. *Nga-maj* **hën**   *baho.*
            3SG-die   GNRP   sorcery
            'She was killed through sorcery (lit. She died of sorcery).' [57-174]

c. *Ntrak   nga-ru   gmay **hën**   mato.*
    truck   3SG-be.two come GNRP 1PL.EXCL
    'Two trucks came because of/for us.' [20-42]

d. *Be   nu-van   **hën**-i   mi.*
    NEGMOD 1SG.IRR-go GNRP-OBJ again
    'You can no longer chase it (lit. go for/because of it).' [112-40]

The examples in (9.34) also demonstrate the different types of objects that *hën* can introduce, including a noun (9.34a-b), a personal pronoun (9.34c) or an object pro-index (9.34d). It is common for *hën* to introduce a nominalised verb (9.34a). *Hën* can also function as a subordinator to introduce reason and purpose clauses (see §13.2.2.1). Very commonly, the same meaning can be expressed with a clause (following *hën* as subordinator) or a noun phrase (following *hën* as a preposition). The clauses in examples (9.35) express the same proposition with one using the nominalised form of the verb *paj* 'sleep', while the other involves a subordinate clause with the same verb.

(9.35) a. *Ta-van **hën**   pajin.*
       3PL-go GNRP sleeping
       'They are going to sleep.' [116-59]

b. *Mara-van   **hën**   mara-paj.*
    1DU.EXCL-go in.order.to 1DU.EXCL-sleep
    'We are going to sleep.' [31-130]

Hën can also introduce an object denoting the destination of movement, either in a spatial context, as in (9.36a) or in a temporal context as in (9.36b-c).

(9.36) a. *Nga-van **hën**   naur   Noumea   nogay.*
       3SG-go GNRP place N.   already
       'It [the ship] is travelling towards Noumea now.' [20-31]

b. *sande   [aven mata-ro-van   **hën**-i*]
    Sunday REL   1PL.EXCL-IPFV-go GNRP-OBJ
    'next Sunday' (Lit. 'the Sunday we are moving towards') [57-221]

c. *Dra-gmay   **hën**   kayrmarin s-draru.*
    1DU.INCL-come GNRP prayer   POSS.GNR-1DU.INCL
    'We arrive at the time for our prayer.' [98-283]

Hën can also have associative function. The utterances produced in this way are similar to possessive constructions and were discussed in detail in §5.5.1. The examples in (9.37) demonstrate this function with an object of *hën* (possessor) expressed by a noun (9.37a) or the object pro-index (9.37b).

(9.37) a. *matmatuin   hën   **naliur***
        power   GNRP   island
        'the power of the island' [3-140]

      b. *Narog   hën-**i**   nga-kajkaj.*
        laplap   GNRP-OBJ   3SG-be.sweet
        'The laplap (that is made) of it is sweet.' [17-69]

Hën can introduce instruments as in (9.38) where the instruments are expressed by noun phrases (9.38a-b) or object pro-index (9.38c).

(9.38) a. *Ta-tams-i   **hën**   baho.*
        3PL-hit-OBJ   GNRP   sorcery
        'They killed her using sorcery.' [57-172]

      b. *Ata-r-pës-i   **hën**   ronviu.*
        3PL-SBQT-tie-OBJ   GNRP   umbrella.plant
        'They will tie it with [the leaves of the] umbrella plant.' [75-34]

      c. *Mata-va-tams   nras   **hën**-i.*
        1PL.EXCL-GO-hit   seawater   GNRP-OBJ
        'We hit the seawater with it.' [6-58]

Hën has been attested introducing the topic of a speech act, equivalent to the English preposition 'about', as in (9.39). This function is more commonly expressed with the help of the verb *husür* 'follow', usually in a nuclear serial verb construction (see §11.2.1).

(9.39) *Nga-prag   nbe   aven   **hën**   nadru.*
      3SG-make   song   INDF.ART   GNRP   earthquake
      'He made a song of [about] the earthquake.' [3-137]

Hën can be used to introduce the recipient of the verb *pus* 'to ask' or the theme of the verb *vësan/pësan* 'teach' as demonstrated in (9.40). These verbs were discussed in detail in §7.6.

(9.40) a. *...ke-r-va-pus* ***hën*** *nivu.*
2SG.SEC-SBQT-GO-ask GNRP turtle
'...then you should go ask the turtle.' [44-84]

b. *Na-vësan* *nren* *ngail* ***hën*** *votin.*
1SG-teach man NSG GNRP voting
'I taught the people about voting.' [49-133]

- ***Drwan* 'with'**

Drwan most often has comitative function, meaning the action referred to by the verb is performed together with, or in the presence of the object, as in (9.41a-c). In such cases, the object is normally a human. Less often *drwan* has confective function, meaning that the subject is performing the action while carrying or otherwise being accompanied by a usually inanimate object, as in examples (9.41d-e). The clause in example (9.41d) refers to a person dancing while holding a mask. The clause in example (9.41e) was taken from a description of traditional ways for a man to advance in the traditional male hierarchy.

Less commonly, *drwan* introduces an instrument, as in (9.41f), which refers to an engine which uses charcoal as fuel. When *drwan* has confective or instrumental function, the object is normally non-human.

In examples (9.41a-b,d) the object is expressed by the object pro-index, in which case the object is either clear from the wider context, or the object pro-index refers to the head of a relative clause as in (9.41b). In (9.41c) the object is a personal pronoun, while in (9.41e-f) the object is a noun phrase with a noun as head.

(9.41) a. *Mata-tov* ***drwan-i*** *ur* *ha.*
1PL.EXCL-stay with-OBJ place PROX
'We stayed with her here.' [87-96]

b. *nakemarwenin* *s-ag* [*aven* *na-roh* ***drwan-i***]
uncle POSS.GNR-1SG REL 1SG-stay with-OBJ
'my uncle, the one that I am staying with' [90-13]

c. *Drata-ple* ***drwan*** *ato.*
1PL.EXCL-play with 3PL
'We play [football] with (=against) them.' [60-46]

d. *Nga-ro-sev* ***drwan-i.***
3SG-IPFV-dance with-OBJ
'He dances with it [a mask].' [87-55]

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e. *Ka-tobat* **drwan** *narëh* *nahës.*
2SG-start with small.one title
'You start with a low rank.' [21-54]

f. *Nga-gas* **drwan** *jakol.*
3SG-work with charcoal
'[The engine] works with charcoal.' [33-3]

g. *Ata-mas-han-i* **drwan** *drato.*
3PL-NEC-eat-OBJ with 1PL.EXCL
'They must eat it with us.' [41-50]

Drwan also functions as a coordinator of NPs (see §6.6).

- **Dran 'away from'**

Dran is mostly used with verbs of movement to denote movement away from an object or person, as the examples in (9.42) demonstrate. It denotes source of movement, although emphasis is placed on the separation of the object from the subject of *dran*. The object of *dran* can be nominal or it can be expressed by the object pro-index *-i* (9.42c-d). The examples in (9.42e-f) provide evidence for the status of *dran* as a preposition, rather than a coverb, since it appears after the object.

(9.42) a. *Nga-gam* **dran** **hayug.**
3SG-run away.from 2SG
'She ran away from you.' [44-113]

b. *...nge-r-varus* **dran** *a* **Taso**
3SG.SEC-SBQT-paddle away.from pers T.
'...then she paddled away from Taso.' [44-39]

c. *In* *drata-van* **dran-i** *nog.*
DEM.PRN 1PL.INCL-go away.from-OBJ already
'This one, we already left it.' [402-18]

d. *lön* *nabong* [*aven* *mata-van* **dran-i** *nog*]
LOCP day REL 1PL.EXCL-go away.from-OBJ already
'in the past few days.' (Lit. 'on the days that we have already left behind.') [97-46]

e. *Ata-ro-vër-i* **dran** *mato.*
3PL-IPFV-buy-OBJ away.from 1PL.EXCL

'They buy them [the mats] from us.' [7-119]

f. *Hayvur   nga-gmay   rav   Tom Malik   **dran**   hana.*
    old.man   3SG-come   take T.M.   away.from   1SG
    'The old man came and took Tom Malik from me.' [56-121]

Another common usage of *dran* is with the verb *(maj)maj* 'to die' referring to a person passing away and leaving behind their living relatives:

(9.43) *Ara-majmaj   **dran**   a   kenarënin   s-aru*
        3DU-die   away.from   PERS   child   POSS.GNR-3DU
        'They died, leaving behind their children.' [46-44]

- ***Drov** and *rov* 'close to'*

The prepositions *drov* and *rov* both mean 'close to' and are considered variants of each other.[102] Both take the object pro-index *-e* with the associated stem vowel change from /o/ to /u/ (see §2.5.7) as in (9.44b,d). In (9.44a,d) the prepositions occur outside of the verb complex, which suggests they cannot be treated as coverbs. When the object of *drov* and *rov* is human, the meaning of the preposition is the comitative 'with', as (9.44e-f). In (9.44g) *rov* introduces a recipient.

(9.44) a. *Nga-paj   roh   livheur   **drov**   var   iha.*
            3SG-sleep be.located shore   close.to stone   PROX
            'He slept by the shore close to this rock.' [88-92]

        b. *Nahre   ngail   s-mato   ata-tov   roh   **druv-e.***
            child   NSG   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL 3PL-stay be.located close.to-OBJ
            'Our children are living close to it.' [112-6]

        c. *Nmaru   nga-drëm   **rov**   navüj.*
            coconut 3SG-fall   close.to banana
            'The coconut fell close to the banana.' [237-11]

        d. *Nwoy   nga-tav-ni   a   mhar   **ruv-e.***
            water 3SG-carry-OBJ   LOC   up   close.to-OBJ
            'The water carried it up close to it.' [237-6]

        e. *...nge-r-va-rohroh   **drov**   hayug.*

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[102] The verb-like preposition *rov* should not be confused with the fully functioning verb *rov* 'block; smash'

3SG.SEC-SBQT-GO-be.located   close.to   2SG
'…then he (Jesus) went [back] to be with you [God].' [98-63]

f.   *Narbaruh*   *kin*   *bar-roh*   *matu*   ***rov***   *mato*   *aha.*
    girl   DIM.DEM   FUT-be.located   be.strong   close.to   1PL.EXCL   here
    'The young girl will stay permanently with us here.' [46-19]

g.   *Mata-testifaem*   *maurin*   *s-mato*   *vi*   ***rov***   *Atua.*
    1PL.EXCL-witness   life   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL   go.to   close.to   God
    'We witness our lives to (before) God.' [57-422]

- *Perjag* **'close to'**

Perjag is another preposition which means 'close to'. Its object can be a human or non-human entity as in the examples in (9.45). *Perjag* takes the object pro-index *-ni* as in (9.45d).

(9.45)   a.   *Ta-lum-i*   ***perjag***   *naur*   *a*   *im*   *ne.*
            3PL-plant-OBJ   close.to   place   LOC   village   LIM
            'They just plant it close to the village.' [115-5]

        b.   *Mata-gam*   *van*   *vi*   ***perjag***   *naur*   *Lasovsa.*
            1PL.EXCL-run   go   go.to   close.to   place   L.
            'We run towards Lasovsa.' [237-18]

        c.   *Be*   *ka-r-va-paj*   ***perjag***   *a*   *nana*   *mi.*
            NEGMOD   2SG-SBQT-GO-sleep   close.to   PERS   mother   again
            'You should no longer go sleep next to [your] mom.' [44-114]

        d.   *Na-gmay*   ***perjag-ni***   *nog.*
            1SG-come   close.to-OBJ   already
            'I am already close to it.' [237-20]

Perjag can also function as an adverb meaning 'almost' (see §9.2.7).

- *Gor* **'over'**

The preposition *gor* means 'over, around' in a context of covering or blocking something. It takes the object pro-index *-e* with the associated stem vowel change from /o/ to /u/ (see §2.5.7). The examples in (9.46) demonstrate its use with a nominal object and with an object pro-index. In (9.46a), *gor* appears outside of the verb complex, while in (9.46b) it appears

immediately after the verb in a construction which strongly resembles coverbal constructions. *Gor* is most commonly used in such constructions and semantically it resembles a verb more than some other prepositions. *Gor* is also a frequently used lexeme, so it provides a suitable case study for the connection between prepositions and coverbs. This connection is explored in more detail in §12.2.2.1.

(9.46) a. *Ngar-**kor***   ***nabbugaw gor***   *naur*   *aven…*
       3SG-SBQT-make   fence   over   place   REL
       'He built a fence around the place, which...' [15.1-100]

      b. *Drata-ro-tam-tamës*   ***gur**-e.*
       1PL.INCL-IPFV-DUP[103]-hit   over-OBJ
       'We are preventing [the fish from escaping the pool] by repeatedly hitting [the water with sticks].' [61-30]

9.2.5.3 *Noun-like prepositions*

- *Vis-en* **'to (dative), for (benefactive)'**

The preposition *vis-en* behaves like a Type A inalienable noun (see §5.2.1) in that it obligatorily takes a suffix: either the possessive suffixes *-ag, -am, -en*, which in this case mark a pronominal object in the first-, second- and third-person singular respectively, or the construct suffix *-en*, which is used with any other nominal or pronominal objects, including singular personal pronouns. The possible constructions with *vis-en* can be summarised as:

(9.47) | PP → *vis*-[possessive suffix] (object is 1/2/3SG)
PP → *vis*-[construct suffix] NP

All possible forms of the object (including suffixes, personal pronouns and nouns) are demonstrated in the examples below. The most common function of *vis-en* is to introduce a recipient as in (9.48a-f). The object can be the recipient of verbs of motion as in (9.48a-b) or of locutionary acts as in (9.48c-f). *Vis-en* can also have benefactive meaning, as in (9.48g).

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[103] Reduplication is not normally glossed in this work. Here it is specifically glossed because it contributes significantly to understanding the example. The function of reduplication is described in §7.8.2.

Verbs that can take three arguments, some of which are commonly introduced by *vis-en*, such as *pësah* 'give' (in 9.48a), are discussed in detail in §7.6.

(9.48) a. *British government   nga-pësah-ni   vis-**ag.***
             B.g.   3SG-give-OBJ   to-1SG
             'The British government gave it to me.' [49-84]

      b. *Ta-bël-ni   vis-**en**   **mato.***
           3PL-throw-OBJ   to-CNSTR   1PL.EXCL
           'They threw it to us.' [57-208]

      c. *Mato   mata-r-sër-i   vis-**am.***
           1PL.EXCL   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-tell-OBJ   to-2SG
           'We will tell it [the story] to you.' [57-434]

      d. *Nalikopit   nga-kar-e   vis-**en***…
           dolphin   3SG-say-OBJ   to-3SG
           'The dolphin told him…' [44-72]

      e. *Na-kar   sipal   vis-**en**   **hayug.***
           1SG-say   thanks   to-CNSTR   2SG
           'I say thanks to you.' [44-100]

      f. *Mra-gmay   sëlvar   vis-**en**   **hanaw.***
           2DU-come   tell.story   to-CNSTR   1SG
           'You two came to tell me a story/chat with me.' [57-139]

      g. *Ta-gas   vis-**en**   **abat.***
           3PL-work   for-CNSTR   foreigner
           'They work for the foreigner.' [18.1-26]

Another way to encode a beneficiary is though possessive classifiers. When the beneficiary is singular and pronominal, the possessive determiners (*s-ag, s-am, s-en, (n)h-ag, (n)h-am, (n)he-n*) are used, while in other cases the bare classifiers *sa* or *(n)ha* are used (see §5.5.2 for elaboration and examples).[104] This corresponds to the structures attested for *vis-en*. This correspondence in form and function between the possessive morphology and *vis-en* suggests that the two constructions are historically related. It is likely that *vis-en* emerged as a

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[104] Examples (5.26a-b) demonstrate the correspondence particularly well, because they feature the same verb as example (9.48g).

combination of the verb *vi* 'go to', which can be involved in encoding recipients (see §9.2.5.1) and the general possessive determiners/classifier.

- **Madrë-n 'behind'**

The directly possessed Type A noun *(n)madrë-n* meaning 'back(side)' (see §5.2.1) can be used to mean 'behind' (without *n*-accretion). The object of the preposition *madrë-n* is expressed in the same way as the possessor of the inalienable noun *madrë-n* – with a possessive or construct suffix. Example (9.49) illustrates the use of *madrë-n* as a preposition.

(9.49) *Nsel   s-am   nga-paj   roh   madrë-n   hayug.*
       knife   POSS.GNR-2SG   3SG-lay   be.located   back-CNSTR   2SG
       'Your knife is behind you.' [238-7][105]

9.2.5.4   Complex prepositions

Some phrases involving the prepositions *lön* and *hën* can be treated as grammaticalised complex prepositions. The attested forms are listed in (9.50) with some notes on their etymology and structure. These prepositions differ from the complex prepositions beginning with *lön* (see §9.2.5.1) in that they can be considered as having a higher degree of grammaticalisation. The preposition in (9.50a) involves a local noun, while the prepositions in (9.50b) can be considered partial calques. *(A) mhar lön* and *insaed lön* introduce a location, while *lön saed hën* has associative function.

(9.50)	Complex prepositions with *lön* and *hën*		
	complex preposition	gloss	comment
a.	*(a) mhar lön*	'on top of, up on'	*Mhar* is a local noun meaning 'above' which commonly appears with the local maker *a* (see §3.5).[106]
b.	*insaed lön*	'inside of'	*Insaed* is a borrowing from Bislama meaning 'inside' It can also be spelled *insaet*. In Bislama it also appears as *insaed long* - Ahamb's *insaed lön* is likely a calque of Bislama's *insaed long*.
	lön saed hën	'with regard to'	*Lön saed hën* is calque of Bislama *long saed blong* 'with regard to'. *Hën* is used here in its associative function.

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[105] If *madrë-n* is preceded by *lön*, it forms a regular prepositional phrase meaning 'on [someone's] back'.

[106] The antonym of *mhar, pen* 'below' (§3.5.1.1) cannot form a corresponding compound preposition: *(a) pen lön* meaning 'underneath'. The utterance *a pen lön* means 'down (there) on (top of)'.

(9.51) a. *Nga-va-sah*   *roh*   ***a mhar lön***   *bag.*
            3SG-GO-climb   be.located   up.on   banyan.tree
            'He climbed up and stayed in the banyan tree.' [39-28]

        b. *Ata-van*   *vi*   ***insaed lön***   *naur*   *ki-n.*
            3PL-go   go.to   inside   place   DIM-DIST
            'They went inside that place.' [32-40]

        c. *Value*   *man bi ngel aven*   *drata-ro-ekspektem*   ***lön saed hën***   *tradition.*
            value   NSG.REL   1PL.INCL-IPFV-expect   with.regard.to   tradition
            'The values that we expect with regard to our traditions.' [71-635]

9.2.5.5   *Summary of the function of prepositions*

The prepositions discussed in this section demonstrate a variety of different functions. Table 9-2 summarises the attested functions of the different prepositions, organised by the semantic roles of the prepositional objects. The combination of *lön* with the verb *vi* 'go to' is listed as a separate entry, although it is not considered a preposition on its own, because its function differs from that of *lön*. It is noteworthy that Ahamb has no dedicated preposition to denote source of movement (apart from *dran* whose function is somewhat limited).

Some of the semantic roles listed in Table 9-2 can be encoded with constructions other than prepositional phrases. Location and source of movement can be expressed without a preposition when local nouns are involved (see §3.5). Coverbs and verbs that serve as second verbs in nuclear serial verb constructions (see §11.2) can also express some of the semantic roles listed above. For example, the coverb *kuv* 'remove' can express movement (see §11.2.2), the topic of a speech act is commonly expressed with the verb *husür* 'follow' (see §11.2.1). The connection between prepositions and (co)verbs is discussed in §11.2.2.1.

Additionally, temporal, local and other settings can be expressed with the help of noun phrases or adverbs, which are discussed in the next two subsections.

Table 9-2. Semantic roles of prepositional objects (uncommon usages are indicated in brackets)

	True prepositions								Verb-like prepositions						Noun-like prep.		Complex prep.
	lön	*vi lön*	*rben*	*ur*	*pen*	*pevën*	*tarven*	*mhay*	*hën*	*drwan*	*dran*	*drov, rov*	*perjag*	*gor*	*vis-en*	*madrë-n*	
Location	✓					✓						✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Direction (destination)		✓							✓		(✓)						
Goal		✓															
Source, origin											✓						
Time	✓						✓										
Theme									✓ᵃ								
Recipient	(✓)	✓							✓ᵇ			(✓)			✓		
Association									✓								✓
Reason			✓	✓					✓								
Purpose									✓								
Beneficiary	(✓)							✓	✓						✓		
Instrument	✓								✓	✓							
Topic of speech act									✓								
Comitative relationship										✓		✓					
Confective relationship					✓					✓							
	ᵃ with the verb *vësan/pësan* 'teach' ᵇ with the verb *pus* 'ask'																

9.2.6 Noun phrases that serve as locative/temporal adjuncts

In Ahamb, some nominal heads relating to locations and temporal settings can occur on their own without being marked by a preposition. Local nouns are often used in this way as illustrated in (9.52). The nouns illustrated here have common noun counterparts which can form locative and temporal phrases with the help of a preposition (see §§3.5.3, 3.3.2.2 for elaboration and examples).

(9.52) a. *Va-kaw   bbwas   **lihayhay.***
        GO-hunt   pig   jungle
        '[I] will go hunt pigs in the jungle.' [24-8]

b. *Ra-r-paj*   ***limarog.***
   3DU-SBQT-sleep   night
   'They are going to sleep at night.' [44-31]

The local noun *ur* 'place, dry land' commonly appears with proximal and distal determiners to mean 'here' and 'there': *ur-ën* 'there (lit: that place)', *ur-ha* 'here (this place)'. These expressions can be treated as noun phrases or as lexicalised items (adverbs).

9.2.7   Adverbs

There is a small closed class of words in Ahamb that do not normally take any inflection and semantically behave as adverbs. These words are listed in (9.53) organised by type: adverbs of place (9.53a), time (9.53b), frequency (9.53c), degree (9.53d) and manner (9.53e).

(9.53)	Adverbs in Ahamb	
a.	*aha*	'here'
	aya	'there'
	blakor	'across'
	blar	'all over, everywhere'
	iha	'here' (uncommon use of the proximal demonstrative *iha*)
	perjag	'close by'
b.	*kabël*	'yet'
	ngovngov	'early'
	nog(ay)	'already'
	par(nog)	'already'
	mine	'too'
	rohjer	'still', 'yet (neg. polarity item)'
	trab	'until completion, all the way'
c.	*mi*	'again'
	(të)tas	'again' (the combinations *(të)tas … mi, mi (të)tas* have been attested)
d.	*habat*	'much, a lot'
	ki	'a little' (diminutive)
	mdra(w)	'slowly; a little'
	mjëg	'probably' (verificational)
	ne	'just, simply' (limiter) (see §4.11 on its function as a nominal modifier)
	nemjëg	'simply'
e.	*ganha*	'like this' (can also function as a verb)
	ganili	'like that' (can also function as a verb)
	ganën	'like that' (can also function as a verb)
	ngarkavkav	'completely' (lexicalised inflected verb)
	perjag	'almost'

Adverbs can appear outside of the verb complex, often clause-finally. A subset of the adverbs in (9.53) are post-verbal adverbs, that is, they can appear inside the verb complex, between the verb and the nominal object or object pro-index (see §8.5).

Some of the adverbs in (9.53) are very commonly used, while others are rarely attested. The more commonly used adverbs are discussed and illustrated below.

The examples in (9.54) demonstrate the use of four adverbs of place. Such adverbs regularly co-occur with prepositional phrases and can follow them, as in (9.54a-b) or precede them as in (9.54c). In (9.54d), th adverb *perjag* follows the deictic marker *gmay*.

(9.54) a. *Mata-rs-i*   *lön*   *Ahamb*   **aha.**
            1PL.EXCL-see-OBJ   LOCP   A.   here
            'We saw it here on Ahamb.' [57-427]

      b. *Mata-van*   *lavtür*   *lön*   *bangim*   **aya.**
            1PL.EXCL-go   pass.through   LOCP   door   there
            'We passed through the door there. ' [20-64]

      c. *Nhay*   *nga-paj*   **blakor**   *lön*   *nteva*   *nga-ru.*
            wood   3SG-sleep   across   LOCP   table   3SG-be.two
            'The wood is lying across the two tables.' [504-20]

      d. *Rujan*   *nwog*   *ili*   *gmay*   **perjag!**
            push   canoe   ANA   come   close
            'Push the canoe closer!' [70-50]

The adverb *nog* means 'already' and expresses perfect meaning.[107] It can follow directly after an intransitive verb (9.55a) but usually follows the object of a transitive verb (9.55b-c) and normally follows prepositional phrases as in examples (9.55d-f).

(9.55) a. *Nalimarog*   *nga-van*   **nog.**
            night   3SG-go   already
            'The night is already gone.' [28-9]

      b. *Na-han*   *narog*   **nog.**
            1SG-eat   laplap   already
            'I already ate laplap.' [201-137]

      c. *Ta-prag-ni*   **nog.**

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[107] Perfect meaning can also be expressed with the verb *hav* 'finish' or with the other adverbs meaning 'already', listed in (9.53b).

          3PL-do-OBJ   already
          'They have already done it.' [57-34]

   d. *Na-lös*   *a*   *ras*   ***nog****.*
       1SG-bathe   LOC   sea   already
       'I have already bathed in the sea.' [201-126]

   e. *Ki-ruru*   *a*   *bi*   ***nog****?*
       2SG.IRR-return   LOC   where   already
       'Where have you returned from?' [55-137]

   f. *Ato*   *ata-gas*   *drwan*   *a*   *Timo*   ***nog****.*
       3PL   3PL-work   with   PERS   Timo   already
       'They have already worked with Timo.' [78-5]

The position of *nog* within the clause can vary to express focus. The clause in (9.56a) is an answer to a question about where some particular books would be bought. The speaker here wants to emphasise that the books have already been bought (since the asker had assumed they were going to be bought in the future). In (9.56b), *nog* appears directly after the subject. In this sentence, *nog* is probably what is left after an ellipsis of an underlying predicate meaning 'the devil [has been here already and] has eaten…'

 (9.56) a. *Na-vër-i*   ***nog***   *Lamap.*
           1SG-buy-OBJ   already   L.
           'I already bought it at Lamap.' [55-145]

      b. *Narmaj* ***nog***   *nga-han* *tete*   *s-draru*   *aven.*
          devil   already 3SG-eat child POSS.GNR-1DU.INCL INDF.ART
          'The devil already ate one of our children.' [53-71]

Although less commonly, *nog* can modify stative verbs as in (9.57). This example also demonstrates the use of the adverb *mdra(w)*.

 (9.57) *Na-roh*   ***nga-blav***   ***mdra*** ***nog****.*
       1SG-live   3SG-be.long   little   already
       'I have already lived for quite a while.' [57-6]

The form *nogay* expresses the same meaning as *nog*.

(9.58) a. *Nga-soh   nasëbon   **nogay***.
3SG-reach   end   already
'It already reached the end.' [3-126]

b. *Nga-hav   **nogay***.
3SG-finish   already
'It finished already.' [101-38]

Sometimes *nogay* is translated as "now" (similar to *nogha* 'now') marking the beginning of an action (the preparation phase has finished), to focus on the result of an action or the start of an action after a period of preparation:

(9.59) *Mata-ro-tobat   parëgin   **nogay***.
1PL.EXCL-IPFV-start   laplap.making   now
'We are just starting to make laplap now.' [73-15]

Parnog is a complex adverb meaning 'already', which is the combination of two adverbs that mean 'already': *par* and *nog*. *Par* is discussed in §11.2.2.2 in connection with the relationship between adverbs and coverbs.

(9.60) *Na-lös   a   ras   **parnog***.
1SG-bathe   LOC   sea   already
'I already swam in the sea.' [201-127]

Rohjer means 'still' in affirmative clauses.

(9.61) a. *Nwoy   s-am   nga-ro-sah   **rohjer***.
water   POSS.GNR-2SG   3SG-IPFV-boil   still
'Your water is still boiling.' [201-200]

b. *Nga-ro-leb   **rohjer***.
3SG-IPFV-be.big   still
'It is still growing.' [85-62]

c. *Nrang   nga-drag   sadr   ahnaw   **rohjer***.
wind   3SG-strong   beat   1SG   still
'The wind is even stronger than me.' [254-13]

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Rohjer can also occur in clauses with standard negation meaning '(not) yet'. Another negative polarity item, *kabël* has the same meaning in sentences expressing negative modality with the *be/bi* marker. These are discussed in more detail in §10.8.

Mi and *(të)tas* mean 'again'. *(Të)tas* (but not *mi*) is one of the adverbs which can also appear within the verb complex (see §8.5). *Mi* and *(të)tas* can be used on their own or together. When used on their own, they usually occur at the end of the clause, as in (9.62a-b). When the two adverbs co-occur to reinforce their meaning, they appear in a specific order. When they appear at the end of the clause, they appear as *mi tëtas*, as in (9.62c). No cases of **mi tas* have been attested, meaning that the second adverb always appears in its reduplicated form in such cases. Alternatively, *(të)tas* appears within the verb complex and *mi* at the end of the clause, as in (9.62d).

(9.62) a. *Mata-varus   bonbon   **mi.***
            1PL.EXCL-paddle   together   again
            'We paddle together again.' [36-67]

      b. *Mata-ruru   gmay   ur   ha   **tëtas.***
            1PL.EXCL-return   come   place   PROX   again
            'We returned to this place again.' [90-67]

      c. *Nga-rub   **mi**   **tëtas.***
            3SG-grow   again   again
            'It grows again.' [54-93]

      d. *Na-pësah   **tas**   ni   vis-en   a   hayvur   **mi.***
            1SG-give   again   OBJ   to-CNSTR   PERS   old.man   again
            'I will give it to the old man again.' [89-10]

Mi can be used in negative constructions to mean 'no longer' (see §10.8).

The adverbs of degree *habat* 'much' and *mdra(w)* 'little' are commonly used. With transitive verbs they tend to appear within the verb complex, between the verb and the object (or object pro-index), as in (9.63a) (see also 8.40c-d in §8.5). With intransitive verbs, they tend to follow the verb directly (9.63b-c). They can also appear clause-finally following adjuncts as in (9.63d).

(9.63) a. *Nga-tamës   **habat**   nmaru.*
            3SG-hit   much   coconut
            'It [the cyclone] seriously affected the coconut plantations.' [1-16]

b. *Na-visen   nakemkemin   nga-leb   **habat.***
   1SG-have   joy   3SG-be.big   much
   'I feel great joy.' [27-31]

c. *Nras   nga-ro-u   **mdra**   nogay.*
   Sea   3SG-IPFV-rise   little   already
   'The tide is already rising a little.' [68-28]

d. *Nga-vi   a   jüdr   **habat.***
   3SG-COP   LOC   away   much
   'It was very far away.' [18.1-58]

The diminutive *ki* normally functions as a noun modifier (see §4.3), but can also function as an adverb.

(9.64) *Nga-paj   **ki**   van.*
       3SG-sleep   DIM   go
       'He slept for a little bit.' [115-51]

Ne is a limiter and can function as an adverb as in (9.65). Like *ki, ne* can also be a noun modifier (see §4.11).

(9.65) *Ta-rohroh   **ne.***
       3PL-stay   LIM
       'They just stay [there].' [57-77]

The very common manner adverb *ganha* 'like this' can appear both inside and outside of the verb complex (see example 8.40b in §8.5). Examples with *ganili* and *ganën* 'like that' are given in (9.66). The three forms are derivatives of the verb *gan* meaning 'be like, resemble' paired with the demonstratives *ha* 'PROX', *ili* 'ANA' and *ën* 'DIST' (see §4.5). All these forms, including the verb, are commonly used as fillers by Ahamb speakers.

(9.66) a. *Nga-soh   naur   **ganili.***
          3SG-reach   place   like.that
          'Thus he reached the place.' [25-50]

       b. *Ata-kor   **ganën.***
          3PL-do   like.that
          'They did like that.' [22-26]

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An example with *perjag* 'amost' is given in (9.67). As the example demonstrates, *perjag* can appear before the verb and is the only adverb that has been attested to exhibit this behaviour.

(9.67) *Nren   Malekula   **perjag**   atë-bar-hav   par.*
       man   M.   almost   3PL-FUT-finish   already
       'The people of Malekula were about to go extinct.' [111-20]

9.2.8   The deictic markers *van, gmay, roh*

The directional verbs *van* 'go' and *gmay* 'come' as well as the positional verb *roh* 'be located' very commonly appear as bare roots to specify a direction of movement (to and from respectively) or position, relative to the deictic centre, defined as as "the place of speech […], fictive speech […], or a place that is salient in the discourse, especially in narratives" (Ridge 2019: 271).[108] These forms are treated here as grammaticalised deictic markers.

These markers can occur in different positions within the clause: inside the nucleus, within the core or in the periphery.

In the examples in (9.68), *gmay, van* and *roh* appear directly after intransitive verbs.

(9.68) a.   *Mta-ruru   **gmay**   urha.*
            2PL-return   come   here
            'You come back here!' [3-8]

       b.   *Nga-taj   **gmay**   lihayhay.*
            2SG-creep   come   jungle
            'He crept closer through the jungle.' [30-25]

       c.   *Mara-varus   **gmay**.*
            1DU.EXCL-paddle   come
            'The two of us were paddling this way.' [56-56]

       d.   *Nga-ro-gam   **van**   vi   Farun.*
            3SG-IPFV-run   go   go.to   F.
            'He is running towards Farun.' [56-67]

       e.   *Niv   ki-li   nga-ser   **roh**   a   ras.*
            turtle   DIM-DEM   3SG-float   be.located   LOC   sea
            'The turtle is floating on the sea.' [44-86]

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[108] In the case of *roh,* the reduplicated form *rohroh* has not been attested with this function, although it commonly appears as a verb.

f. *Nwog   ili   nga-ser   **roh**.*
   canoe   ANA   3SG-float   be.located
   'The canoe floats in one place.' [36-69]

g. *Ata-ro-suswah   **roh**   Lipangpang.*
   3PL-IPFV-hide   be.located   L.
   'They are hiding at Lipangpang.' [32-23]

When *gmay, van* and *roh* follow transitive verbs, they most commonly denote the movement or position of the object of that verb. In this case, they follow the object:[109]

(9.69) a. *Ta-paj-i   **gmay**   kiaha.*
            3PL-carry-OBJ   come   today
            'They brought it today.' [110-45]

        b. *Vare pen   pësah-ni   **van**   vis-en   hayug.*
            world   give-OBJ   go   to-CNSTR   2SG
            'The world gave it to you.' [23-48]

        c. *Mata-sar-e   **van**.*
            1PL.EXCL-carry-OBJ   go
            'We carried it away.' [4-12]

        d. *Na-tah-ni   **roh**   mhar   iha.*
            1SG-tie-OBJ   be.located   up   PROX
            'I tied it up here.' [97-114]

        e. *Nga-va-rëng-i   **roh**.*
            3SG-GO-put-OBJ   be.located
            'He leaves it [there].' [8-59]

Gmay and *van* commonly appear after the word *naser* 'road', which acts as an object to motion verbs as in (9.70).

(9.70) a. *Nga-husür   naser   **gmay**.*
            3SG-follow   road   come.
            'She followed the road here.' [47-27]

---

[109] These constructions resemble switch-function core SVCs (§11.3.1), but differ from them in that the second verb is not inflected, cf. example (11.14a) in §11.3.1, where *gmay* appears as an inflected verb as V2. Such SVCs are, however, not as common as constructions where *gmay* functions as a deictic marker (without inflection).

b. *Ta-rav   naser   s-ato   **van**.*
   3PL-take   road   POSS.GNR-3PL   go
   'They went on their way.' [116-46]

c. *Nga-husür   naser   **van**   vi   a   im.*
   3SG-follow   road   go   go.to   LOC   village
   'He followed the road to the village.' [201-277]

In the examples presented in this section so far, *gmay, van* and *roh* appear in a position that satisfies the conditions for them to be considered part of the nucleus or the core, since any non-core participants and adjuncts followed them. In the examples in (9.71), *gmay, van* and *roh* clearly lie outside of the core.

(9.71) a. *Nga-taj   **lihayhay   gmay**.*
            3SG-creep   jungle   come
            'He creeps closer in the jungle.' [30-25]

   b. *Drata-van   **a   ur   gmay**.*
      1PL.INCL-go   LOC   mainland   come
      'We came from the mainland.' [22-67]

   c. *Ka-sar-e   **drwan   a   tete   ngail   gmay**.*
      2SG-carry-OBJ   with   PERS   child   NSG   come
      'You and all the children bring it here.' [63-55]

   d. *Ata-varus   pen   **gmay**   aha.*
      3PL-paddle   with   come   here
      'They paddle with it here.' [42-14]

   e. *Na-ruru   **tas mi   van**.*
      1SG-return   again   go
      'I went back there again.' [36-83]

   f. *Ata-van   **drwan-i   van**.*
      3PL-go   with-OBJ   go
      'they left with it' [22-117]

   g. *A   nana   s-en   sba-maur   **mi   roh**.*
      PERS   mother   POSS.GNR-3SG   NEG-be.alive   again   be.located
      'His mother is no longer alive.' [116-47]

   h. *...nge-r-paj   **trab   roh**   ai.*
      3SG.SEC-SBQT-lie   always   be.located   there
      '…then he lies there until today.' [68-65]

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The deictic markers *gmay, van* and *roh* are clearly historically verbs. It is possible to hypothesise here a diachronic change from nuclear serial verb construction to core serial verb construction to an adverb-like deictic marker.

Gmay, van and *(roh)roh* as verbs can also function as deictic markers and denote prior motion/positioning in sequentiality constructions (see §13.3.5). The related prefixed modifiers *va-* and *ro-* are discussed in §§8.3, 8.4.

9.3   Interrogatives

Following König & Siemund (2007), two main types of interrogative constructions were identified in Ahamb – polar interrogatives and constituent interrogatives. There are three strategies to code polar interrogatives – verbal inflection, intonation, and less commonly, the addition of interrogative tags. Alternation questions are expressed with the use of the conjunctions *je* and *o* 'or' and are treated here as a type of polar interrogatives. Constituent interrogatives make use of a number of interrogative lexemes (including some complex interrogatives). These are sometimes complemented by verbal inflection and intonation pattern strategies that are typical for coding polar interrogatives.

9.3.1   Polar interrogatives

In Ahamb, polar interrogatives are questions which can be answered by *ee* 'yes' or *awa* 'no' (see §9.8). They are often coded using the irrealis subject indexes (see §8.2.3.1). Examples (9.72a-d) demonstrate the use of irrealis indexes. The example in (9.72b) features an archaic irrealis index form. This strategy can be used both with positive and negative constructions (9.72d).

(9.72)   a.   ***Ki**-rohroh*   *drwan   hana   rohjer?*
                 2SG.IRR-be.located   with   1SG   still
                 'Are you still with me?' [57-118]

          b.   ***Ku**-rah*   *nog?*
                 2SG.IRR-be.married   already
                 'Are you already married?' [16-35]

c. ***I*-vuy**   *roh?*
   3SG.IRR-be.good   be.located
   'Is everything alright?' [36-58]

d. *Nari* ***i*-sba-haj**   *hayug?*
   thing   3SG.IRR-NEG-bite   2SG
   'Did the thing [the shark] not bite you?' [36-58]

Another common strategy to code polar interrogatives is a rise in intonation at the end of a clause, which is followed by an immediate drop. Such clauses are otherwise identical to their corresponding statements. Statements, however, normally have relatively flat intonation without the major clause-final peaks that can be seen in (9.73-9.74) and the associated Figures 9-2 and 9-3.

(9.73) *Na-r-kay*   *nabe?*
        1SG-SBQT-sing   song
        'Shall I sing a song?' [67-52]

total duration: 0.8 sec

200 Hz

75 Hz

na-r-kay	nabe?
1SG-SBQT-sing	song

'Shall I sing a song?' [67-52]
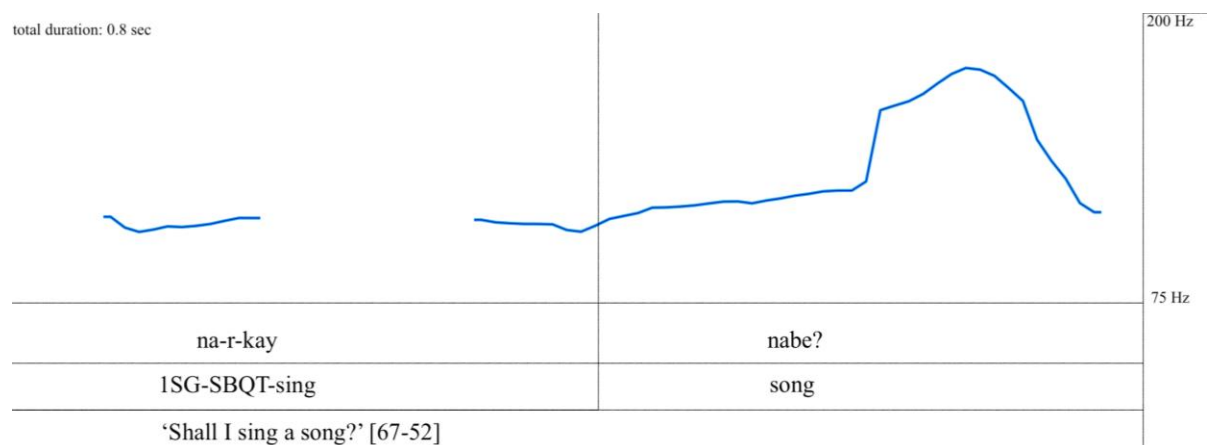
Figure 9-2. Pitch contour of the polar interrogative clause in (9.73)

(9.74) *Bël* *hayug* *sba-novkar-e?*
        but   2SG   NEG-know-OBJ
        'But did you not know it?' [106-25]

total duration: 1.125 sec

350 Hz

75 Hz

bël	hayug	sba-novkar-e?
but	2SG	NEG-know-OBJ

'But did you not know it?' [106-25]
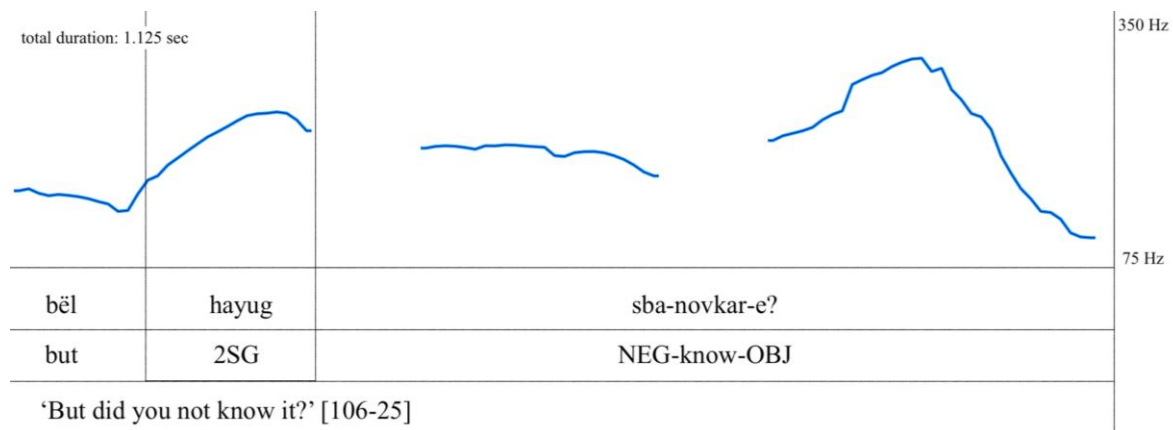
Figure 9-3. Pitch contour of the polar interrogative clause in (9.74)

A third, less commonly used strategy is to use the interrogative particle *a*, which is placed at the end of the clause. There is usually a pause before *a*. In some cases *a* can be viewed as an interrogative tag because it introduces a bias towards a certain expected answer (König & Siemund 2007: 296), as in (9.75b).

(9.75) a. *Mru   mra-mtan   hanaw   a?*
            2DU   2DU-hide   1SG   Q
            'Are you two hiding from me?' [9-126]

        b. *Mahobër   in   nga-paj   roh   pevën   nvar   ngail   a?*
            shark   DIST   3SG-sleep be.located   under   stone NSG   Q
            'The shark is under the rocks, isn't it?' [70-32]

        c. *Ka-gurgur   hayug   a?*
            2SG-prepare 2SG   Q
            'Are you ready?' [70-51]

        d. *Ka-tüs   par   ni   nog   a?*
            2SG-write   already   OBJ   already Q
            'Did you already write it down?' [404-27]

A homophonous interjection is used in encouragement clauses:

(9.76) *Mta-mas-kemkem   a!*
        2DU-NEC-be.happy   ITJ
        'Please be happy!' [71-135]

The coordinator *je* 'or' can also be used as an interrogative particle/tag in a similar way:

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(9.77) *Mti-palong   mta-r-sev   sinayag nogha **je**?*
      2PL.IRR-want   2PL-SBQT-dance   sinayag   now   or
      'Do you want to dance *sinayag* (a traditional dance) now?' [71-795]

The above example can also be interpreted as ellipsis in an underlying alternation question. Alternation questions in Ahamb are formed using the coordinator *je* 'or' or its borrowed equivalent *o*:

(9.78) a. *I-vuy   **je**   sba-vuy?*
         3SG.IRR-be.good   or   NEG-good
         'Is it alright or not?' [71-770]

      b. *I-gurgur   tarven   mato   **o**   i-jhay?*
         3SG.IRR-be.ready   until   1PL.EXCL   or   3SG.IRR-not.exist
         'Is it ready for us or not?' [18.1-152]

A combination of the different strategies to form polar interrogatives is possible. A rise in intonation appears to be compulsory when no other strategy is employed. However, when the interrogative is coded in another overt way, there do not appear to be such constraints on intonation patterns. This is demonstrated in the pitch contours in Figure 9-4 and Figure 9-5 of the clauses with the particle *a* in (9.75b) and (9.75c) above. In the first example there is falling intonation associated with the particle (and a rise in pitch on the word *nvar* 'stone', which is the focus of the question), whereas in the second example there is a rise in pitch associated with *a*.

mahobër	in	nga-paj	roh	pevën	nvar	ngail	a?
shark	DIST	3SG-sleep	be.located	under	stone	NSG	Q

'The shark is under the rocks, isn't it?' [70-32]
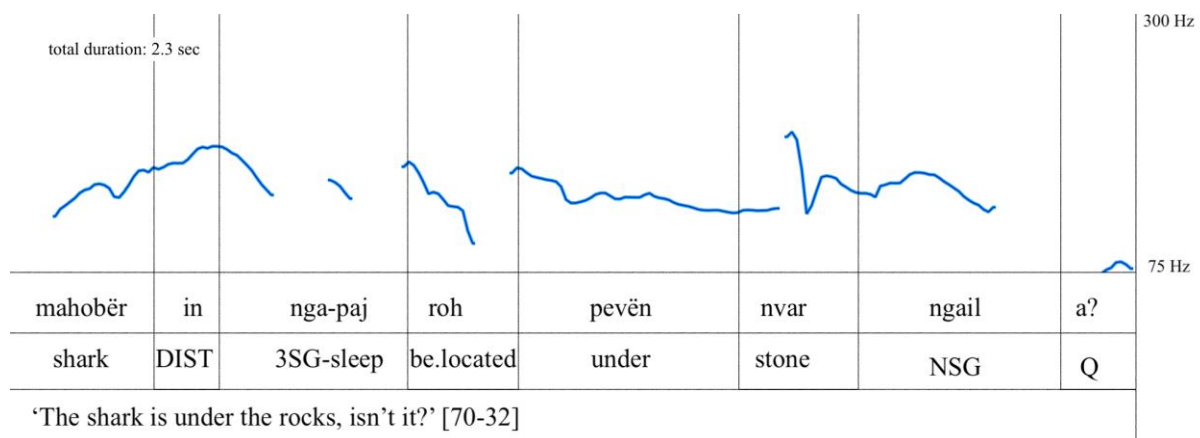
Figure 9-4. Pitch contour of the polar interrogative clause in (9.75b)
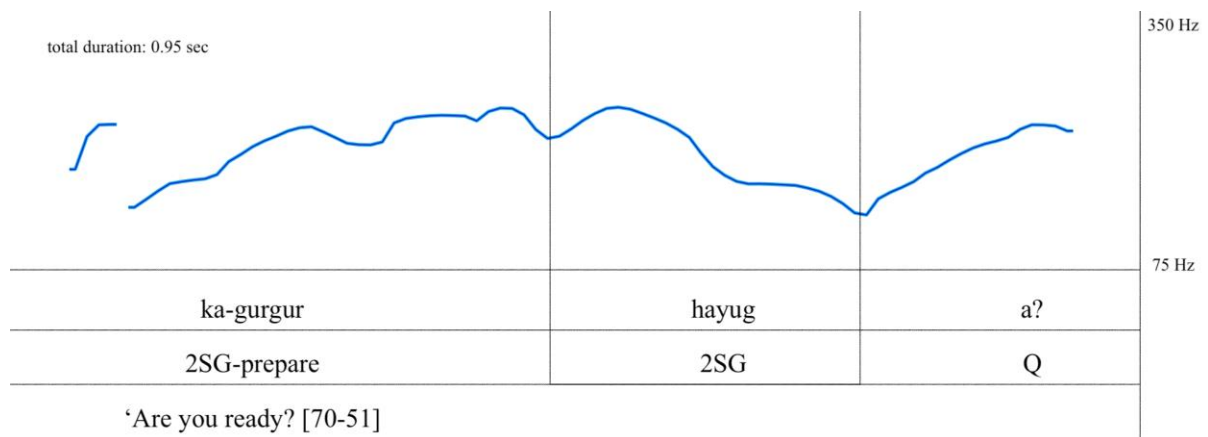
Figure 9-5. Pitch contour of the polar interrogative clause in (9.75c)

9.3.2 Constituent interrogatives

Constituent interrogatives are coded by an interrogative lexeme. In terms of their syntactic behaviour, Ahamb's interrogative lexemes can be classified as nouns, verbs or determiners. Furthermore, there are two complex interrogatives (prepositional phrases). One borrowed interrogative has also been attested. Ahamb's interrogative lexemes are listed in (9.79).

(9.79)	Interrogative words in Ahamb		
	nominal interrogatives:	*si*	'who'
		s(v)eri	'what'
		s(v)ay	'what'
		bi	'where'
		ngais	'when'
	complex interrogatives:	*rben s(v)eri/s(v)ay*	'why, what for'
		hën s(v)eri	'what for, for what reason'
	determiner interrogatives:	*sav/sev*	'which (one)'
		man bi	'which (one)'
	verbal interrogatives:	*vës*	'how much/many'
		vhavës	'how many times'
		(ko)korsay	'how, in what way'
	borrowed interrogative:	*hao*	'how'

The predicates of constituent interrogative constructions are optionally marked with an irrealis subject index, which is the verbal marking strategy for polar interrogatives (see §9.3.1). Constituent interrogative words in Ahamb are normally in situ, appearing in the syntactic position of the constituent they replace. There are some examples of fronting of

interrogative words and some other exceptions to this general rule. These are discussed in the elaboration on the different interrogative lexemes, which follows.

9.3.2.1 Nominal interrogative words

In Ahamb, the interrogative words that replace persons, things and locations/temporal settings behave like nouns in that they appear with morphology typical for nouns.

- **Personal interrogative *si* 'who'**

Si 'who' is often preceded by the personal marker *a,* which is typical for personal nouns (see §3.4). Examples (9.80a-b) below demonstrate the use of *si* with and without the personal marker. Furthermore, *si* can be followed by a personal pronoun to mark person/number, as in (9.80c). *Si* has not been attested as a direct object in the corpus, but it can act as a possessor as in (9.80d) or prepositional object as in (9.80e).

(9.80) a. ***Si***   *nga-ro-gas*   *vis-en*   *hanaw?*
            who   3SG-IPFV-work   to-CNSTR   1SG
            'Who is working for me?' [16-13]

        b. *A*   ***si***   *nga-pësah-ni?*
            PERS   who   3SG-give-OBJ
            'Who gave it?' [71-727]

        c. *A*   ***si***   *ato*   *ta-gmay*   *ro-kan*   *ur*   *ha?*
            PERS   who   3PL   3PL-come   IPFV-eat   place   PROX
            'Who are the people who come to eat here?' [89-59]

        d. *Nari ujuj*   *sa*   *si*   *ha?*
            mobile.phone   CLF.GNR   who   DEM.PRN.PROX
            'Whose mobile phone is this?' [232-108]

        e. *Timo*   *nga-r-pësah*   *naih*   *inën*   *vis-en*   *a*   *si?*
            T.   3SG-SBQT-give   fish   DIST   to-CNSTR   PERS   who
            'To whom is Timo going to give that fish?' [234-45]

- **Common interrogatives *s(v)eri, s(v)ay* 'what'**

The interrogative words *s(v)eri* and *s(v)ay* 'what' (the variants with /v/-elision are in free variation), which prototypically replace common nouns, can take the optional article accretion *n-*, like common nouns (see §3.3). *S(v)eri* is the more commonly used of the two

interrogatives. Both words can function as subjects (9.81a-b), objects (9.81c-d) or obliques (example 9.81f). They can appear either in situ (9.81a-f) or, when they serve as objects they can be fronted, leaving an object pro-index as a trace (9.81g). In (9.81h) *svay* is used in a non-verbal clause.

(9.81)   a.   ***Nsvay***   *nga-kur-e?*
             what   3SG-make-OBJ
             'What did it?' [34-289]

       b.   ***Nsveri***   *nao*   *nga-kur-e*   *naur*   *aven*   *nga-mwas*
             what   FOC   3SG-make-OBJ   place   REL   3SG-be.clear

             mata-ro-van   *hën-i?*
             1PL.EXCL-IPFV-go   GNRP-OBJ
             'What created this clear place that we are going towards?' [89-80]

       c.   *Drata-han*   ***nsvay***   *kiaha?*
             1PL.INCL-eat   what   today
             'What are we going to eat today?' [34-178]

       d.   *Nga-r-han*   ***sveri***?
             3SG-SBQT-eat   what
             'What is he going to eat?' [25-69]

       e.   *Driti-nitim*   ***nsveri***?
             1PL.INCL.IRR-need   what
             'What do we need?' [61-32]

       f.   *Ka-r-van*   *hën*   ***say***?
             2SG-SBQT-go   GNRP   what
             'Why are you going?' [55-86]

       g.   ***Nsveri***   *ka-ro-drëng-i?*
             what   2SG-IPFV-search-OBJ
             'What are you looking for?' [44-70]

       h.   ***Svay***   *ay?*
             what   DEM.PRN
             'What is this?' [39-35]

Sveri and *svay* can be preceded by the prepositions *rben* and *hën*, which can introduce an object denoting reason or purpose, to seek information about the reason for or purpose of a situation/action. The interrogative compounds with *rben* are always fronted whereas those with *hën* are in situ:

(9.82)   a.   ***Rben sveri*** *mangure   nga-ro-kan   limarog?*
          why   flying.fox   3SG-IPFV-eat   night
          'Why does the flying fox feed at night?' [106-7]

      b.   ***Rben svay***   *ka-ngot?*
          why   2SG-not.want
          'Why are you not willing?' [201-107]

      c.   *Ki-gmay*   ***hën sveri?***
          2SG.IRR-come   why
          'What did you come for?' [79-117]

      d.   *Ka-r-van*   ***hën say?***
          2SG-SBQT-go   why
          'Why are you going?' [55-86]

- **Spatial interrogative *bi* 'where'**

The interrogative word *bi* is used to seek information about the location of an event and replaces spatial local nouns. *Bi* can be preceded by the local marker *a* when the location is perceived as position or source of movement, or the verb *vi* 'go to', which marks destination. This behaviour is similar to the behaviour of local nouns and *bi* was described as such in §3.5.1.

Examples (9.83a-e) illustrate the use of *bi* to ask for the position of an event or an object. In (9.83f), *bi* is used to ask for the source of movement and in examples (9.83g-j) it is used to ask for the destination of movement. Irrealis verb marking can be used in combination with *bi* as illustrated by the example pairs (9.83b,g-h). Speakers report no semantic difference between the two examples in each pair. *Bi* can also appear in verbless clauses when denoting position (9.83d-e).

(9.83)   a.   *Nga-rohroh*   ***a***   ***bi?***
          3SG-be.located   LOC   where
          'Where is he?' [201-270]

      b.   *I-rohroh*   ***a***   ***bi?***
          3SG.IRR-be.located   LOC   where
          'Where is he?' [201-269]

      c.   *Nabbiag sa abat   nga-rohroh*   ***a***   ***bi?***
          Fijian.taro   3SG-be.located   LOC   where
          'Where is the Fijian taro?' [201-228]

d. *Nabbiag sa abat* ***a*** ***bi?***
   Fijian.taro   LOC   where
   'Where is the Fijian taro?' [201-229]

e. *Naur*   *a*   *im*   *sa-mru*   ***bi****?*
   place   LOC   village   POSS.GNR-2DU   where
   'Where is your village?' [9-51]

f. *Ngar-van* ***a***   ***bi***   *gmay?*
   3SG-go   LOC   where   come
   'Where is he coming from?' [36-37]

g. *Ki-ro-vi*   ***bi****?*
   2SG.IRR-IPFV-go.to   where
   'Where are you going?' [253-24]

h. *Dri-ro-van*   ***vi***   ***bi?***
   1DU.INCL.IRR-IPFV-go   go.to   where
   'Where are we two going?' [201-312]

i. *Drara-van*   ***vi***   ***bi?***
   1DU.INCL-go   go.to   where
   'Where are we two going?' [201-313]

j. *Hayug*   *ga-r-van*   ***vi***   ***bi?***
   2SG   2SG-SBQT-go   go.to   where
   'Where are you going?' [405-96]

- ***Ngais* 'when'**

The interrogative word *ngais* is used to enquire about the temporal setting of an event, meaning 'when'. *Ngais* can occur in situ, where a temporal phrase expressed by an unmarked temporal local noun would normally appear (see §3.5.2), or it can be fronted. The two examples in (9.84) are deemed identical by speakers. *Ngais* has only been attested in connection with inquiries about future time.

(9.84) a. *Nlanj*   *nga-gmay*   *ngais?*
   boat   3SG-come   when
   'When is the boat coming?' [201-238]

     b. *Ngais*   *nlanj*   *nga-gmay?*
   when   boat   3SG-come
   'When is the boat coming?' [201-237]

To seek information about an event's temporal setting, the sentence can be rephrased as in:

(9.85) *Nga-gmay lön sav taem?*
        3SG-come LOCP which time
        'When (lit. at what time) will he come?' [71-754]

9.3.2.2 *Determiner interrogative words*

The determiner interrogatives *sav/sev* and *man bi* both mean 'which' and replace determiners. As such they do not inflect.

- *Sav/sev* **'which'**

Sav/sev precedes the noun it modifies:

(9.86) a. *Na-sër sav sëlvarin lön nalimarog iha?*
               1SG-tell which story LOCP night PROX
               'What story am I telling tonight?' [18.2-50]

        b. *Sav pnevër ay?*
               which woman DEM.PRN
               'Who is this woman? (lit. Which woman is this?)' [16-51]

        c. *Bar-rav sev kanin?*
               FUT-take which food
               'What food is he going to take?' [57-240]

        d. *Sav namriar s-am nogha?*
               which time POSS.GNR-2SG now
               'What time is it now?' [238-5]

- *Man bi* **'which'**

The compound interrogative word *man bi* 'which' replaces determiners. It follows the noun it modifies as in (9.87a). Example (9.87b) illustrates the use of *man bi* where the noun has been ellipted.

(9.87) a. *Drata-r-han nabbwas man bi?*
               1PL.INCL-SBQT-eat pig which
               'Which pig are we going to eat?' [34-187]

b. *Man bi   na-r-vën-i?*
   which   1SG-SBQT-shoot-OBJ
   'Which one should I shoot?' [34-164]

The form of *man bi* suggests that it is a combination of *bi* 'where' and *man*, which is a temporal marker attached to temporal local nouns (see §3.5.2). However, no cases of *man bi* referring to a temporal setting have been attested. A related function is found when *man bi* is followed by the relativiser *aven* to form a complex relativiser, which can be used with head nouns that refer to locations and temporal settings, as well as other nouns. This is illustrated in (9.88) and discussed in detail in §4.6.6.

(9.88) a. **naur**   *man bi aven*   *drata-jeroh*   *lön*
           place   REL   1PL.EXCL-stay   LOCP
           'the place that we stay at' [23-48]

   b. **taem**   *man bi aven*   *mru*   *mra-r-nov*   *mato*
           time   REL   2DU   2DU-SBQT-think.about   1PL.EXCL
           'that time when you think about us' [71-649]

9.3.2.3   *Verbal interrogative words*

Ahamb's verbal interrogative words function as verbs in that they can take verbal morphology.

- *Vës* **'be how much/many'** and *vhavës* **'how many times'**

The use of *vës* is demonstrated in (9.89). It can be combined with irrealis subject indexes (9.89d).

(9.89) a. *Bar-vi   100   je   bar-vës?*
           FUT-COP   100   or   FUT-how.much
           'Will it be 100 or how much?' [89-75]

   b. *Mata-vës   mete-r-van?*
       1PL.EXCL-how.many   1PL.EXCL.SEC-SBQT-go
       'How many of us went?' [90-27]

   c. *Husür   namriar   nga-vës?*
       follow   day   3SG-how.many
       'For how many days?' [57-80]

    d.   *Nahre   ti-vës?*
        boy   3PL.IRR-how.many
        'How many boys?' [64-25]

The interrogative word *vhavës* 'how many times' is formed by the multiplicative prefix *vha-* as the corresponding numerals meaning 'once', 'twice' etc. (see §4.10). This is in line with *vës* functioning as a verb, just as numerals do in Ahamb. *Vhavës* has been attested only in uninflected form as in (9.90).

(9.90)   *Mata-van   vhavës?*
         1PL.EXCL-go   how.many.times
         'How many times did we go?' [20-11]

- *(Ko)korsay* **'how'**

Korsay and its reduplicated form *kokorsay*, can function as a predicate meaning 'what to do' (9.91a-c), or as a transitive verb 'what to do to/about (something/someone)' (9.91d). It can also mean 'how come' (9.91e) and is used to ask 'How are you?' following a greeting (9.91f). In the latter two functions, it takes the third-person singular irrealis subject index. *Korsay* and *kokorsay* appear to be in free variation.

(9.91) a. *Wawa   nga-maj ganha,   na-r-korsay   jkay?*
          brother 3SG-die   like.this   1SG-SBQT-do.what   one
          'My brother died like this, what am I going to do alone?' [40-120]

      b. *Drata-mjë-kokorsay   van?*
          1PL.INCL-SEQ-do.what   go
          'What are we going to do now?' [34-290]

      c. *Na-r-kokorsay   hën-i?*
          1SG-SBQT-do.what   GNRP-OBJ
          'What am I going to do about it?' [34-170]

      d. *Drata-r-korsay-ni   mi?*
          1PL.INCL-SBQT-do.what-OBJ   again
          'What shall we do with him?' [40-170]

      e. *I-korsay   ka-ngot   ka-r-lös?*
          3SG.IRR-like.what   2SG-not.want   2SG-SBQT-bathe
          'How come you don't want to bathe?' [201-109]

f. *I-korsay?*
3SG.IRR-do.what
'How are you?' [34-74]

(Ko)korsay can have an adverbial function (seeking information on the manner in which an event is being carried out) meaning 'how, in what way', in which case it normally appears uninflected (9.92a-c). In those cases, the main verb in the clause can be marked by an irrealis subject index (9.92c).

(9.92) a. *Bël nga-r-soh naur a im korsay?*
but 3SG-SBQT-reach place LOC village how
'But how is he going to reach the village?' [68-37]

b. *Na-r-jëb kokorsay bahobër iha?*
1SG-SBQT-shoot how shark PROX
'How am I going to shoot this shark?' [70-55]

c. *I-paj kokorsay?*
3SG.IRR-sleep how
'How did he sleep?' [70-34]

9.4 Commands – imperatives and prohibitives

9.4.1 Imperatives

There is no special morphology to mark imperatives in Ahamb. A few examples are listed in (9.93). Imperatives are most commonly coded with the neutral subject indexes (9.93a-c) sometimes in combination with the subsequential marker *r-* (9.93d) (see §8.2.1). The bare stem of a verb can also be used to express imperatives, either when the recipient of the command has been specified in a different way, for example by a freestanding personal pronoun (9.93e) or is otherwise retrievable from the context (9.93f-g). Imperatives are prototypically used with second-person singular (9.93a,d-e), dual (9.93c) and plural (9.93b) indexes.

(9.93) a. *Ka-gmay aha!*
2SG-come here
'Come here!' [201-75]

b. *Mta-sar-e!*
   2PL-carry-OBJ
   'Bring it!' [79-124]

c. *Mru   mra-vi   jüdr!*
   2DU   2DU-go   away
   'You two go out!' [4-42]

d. *Ka-r-va-lös!*
   2SG-SBQT-GO-wash
   'Go wash yourself!' [201-173]

e. *Hayug   gmay   pësah   par   is-am!*
   2SG   come   give   already POSS.PRN-2SG
   'You come tell your [story] (lit. come give yours)!' [93-1]

f. *Rujan   nwog   ili   gmay   perjag!*
   push   canoe ANA   come   close
   'Push the canoe closer!' [70-50]

g. *Pojpoj!*
   applaud
   'Applaud!' [71-230]

9.4.2   Prohibitives

In Ahamb, negative imperatives (prohibitives) are expressed by the preverbal particle *be* in combination with a neutral subject index and the post-verbal particle *jab*, as in (9.94). Section 10.3 provides a detailed discussion of prohibitives in Ahamb and lists more examples. Similar constructions involving the preverbal particles *be/bi* but irrealis subject indexes and without *jab* express a range of negative modalities, including discouragement and prevention (see §10.4).

(9.94) **Be   ka**-*van*   *let*   **jab***!*
       PROH1   2SG-go   late   PROH2
       'Don't be late!' [238-6]

9.5   Reflexive and reciprocal constructions

Reflexive and reciprocal constructions are not coded in a special way in Ahamb. There are no special reflexive pronominal forms. Instead, the freestanding personal pronouns are used in the object position to refer to reflexive and reciprocal meanings with reference to the subject.

A reflexive clause with a direct object is given in (9.95a); in (9.95b), the reflexive is oblique. Example (9.95c) demonstrates a reciprocal construction.

(9.95) a. *Nga-ppël* **ange** *nga-vi* *nren.*
3SG-transform 3SG 3SG-become man
'He transformed himself into a man.' [232-10]

b. *Mta-r-serem* *lön* **mto***!*
2PL-SBQT-share LOCP 2PL
'You share [the food] among yourselves!' [71-848]

c. *Dra-van* *dre-r-pen* **draru***.*
1DU.INCL-go 1DU.INCL.SEC-SBQT-paint 1DU.INCL
'We will go and paint each other' [106-33]

9.6 Comparative and superlative constructions

Comparative and superlative constructions in Ahamb are not morphologically coded. Instead the verb *sadr* 'surpass, beat, be better' is used, as in (9.96). The phrasing of the clause suggests whether the construction is comparative (9.96a) or superlative (9.96b). This type of expression of comparative and superlative constructions is common in Malekula languages (e.g. Barbour 2012: 293).

(9.96) a. *Hayug* *ka-vuy* *sadr* *napnevër* *s-ag.*
2SG 2SG-be.beautiful surpass woman POSS.GNR-1SG
'You are more beautiful than my wife.' [47-42]

b. *Nga-rah* *nren* *aven* *nga-drag* *sadr* *nren* *ngail* *parne*
3SG-marry man REL 3SG-be.strong surpass man NSG QNT

lön *vare pen.*
LOCP world
'She will marry the strongest man in the world.' [254-8]

9.7 Non-verbal clauses

Some clauses in Ahamb do not feature a verb. In one type of non-verbal clauses the subject is expressed by a nominal phrase and then restated with the third-person singular personal pronoun *ange* as in (9.97). This structure appears to be very common with subjects that involve a possessive construction.

(9.97) a. *Nahs-en   hana **ange** Nela.*
name-CNSTR   1SG   3SG   N.
'My name is Nela.' [68-2]

   b. *Nalivanin   s-ag   **ange** nën.*
place.for.walking   POSS.GNR-1SG   3SG   DIST
'That is my territory (for hunting and gathering).' [12-55]

Another type of non-verbal clauses refer to a location, where something is positioned. These can be both interrogatives (9.98a) and statements (9.98b-c). Example (9.98d) demonstrates an identical verbal clause with the verb *rohroh* 'be located.'

(9.98) a. *Naur   a   im   sa-mru   bi?*
place LOC   village POSS.GNR-2DU   where
'Where is your village?' [9-51]

   b. *S-ag   mhar lön   navihuh.*
POSS.GNR-1SG   up   LOCP   hill
'Mine is up there on the hill.' [9-68]

   c. *Naur Lamap a   jüdr.*
place L.   LOC   away
'Lamap is far away.' [60-112]

   d. *Nhay ili   nga-rohroh   a   jüdr   habat.*
tree   ANA 3SG-be.located   LOC   away   much
'The tree is too far away.' [252-12]

9.8 Yes, no and other interjections

The interjections that have been attested in Ahamb are listed in (9.99). Interjections with various meaning and function are listed in (9.99a). The forms in (9.99b) are demonstratives (see §4.5) that can function as interjections or emphatic particles. The four interjections in (9.99c) have the discourse function to mark the beginning and end of a story during traditional storytelling sessions. They involve participation by the speaker and the addressees. Two focus markers are listed in (9.99d).

(9.99) Interjections in Ahamb

a.	*ee*	'yes'
	awa	'no'
	a	ENCOURAGEMENT
	nangot	'no' (lit. 'I don't want.')

	ange nën	'amen' (lit. 'That is it.')
	awe	'SURPRISE, ANNOYANCE'
	bay	'please' (POLITENESS)
	ey	'Hey!"
	jovi	'Lucky!'
	kava	'Hey!, Listen!'
	kaw	SURPRISE
	klah	'OK'
	lele	SURPRISE, FEAR
	ningan	'I don't know, I am not sure'
	oo	'oh'
	opoo	SURPRISE, REGRET
	saye	'Is it done? Finished yet?'
	sipal	'Thank you.'
	sori	'sorry' (borrowing from Bislama)
	sss	DISAPPROVAL
	uy, uyi	IRRITATION, ANNOYANCE
	jun	a swearword with perceived relation to male genitalia (does not function as a noun)
b.	*in, inën*	'This is it!'
	ay, ha	'Here it is. This is the one.' (emphatic markers)
c.	*rongrongbi*	used to mark the beginning of a story (uttered by the storyteller)
	rongrongsal	used to mark the beginning of a story (uttered by the listeners as a response to *rongrongbi*)
	rohrohave	used to mark the end of a story (uttered by the speaker)
	kusvey	used to mark the end of a story (uttered by the listeners as a response to *rohrohave*)
d.	*bbum*	focus marker (FOC)
	mjëg	focus marker (FOC)

The two examples in (9.100) demonstrate the use of the common focus marker *bbum*. It commonly appears at the end of the clause, usually followed by an interjection like *ha* or *ay* to reinforce its function:

(9.100) a. *Nga-hav   nog   **bbum   ay***.
       3SG-finish   already   FOC   ITJ
       'It already finished now!' [20-124]

b. *Sëlvarin   s-mato   nga-va-ro-soh   nasëbon*
   story   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL   3SG-GO-IPFV-reach   end

   *nog   **bbum   ha***.
   already   FOC   ITJ
   'Our story is already approaching its end now.' [57-397]

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9.9   Greetings

Ahamb speakers use a number of greetings. Some greetings that are commonly heard on Ahamb are listed in (9.101). These greetings are specific to the time of the day. Occasionally (and casually), these greetings are reduced to *Ngavuy!*

(9.101)	Greetings in Ahamb	
	Ngavuy prahor!	'Good morning!'
	Ngavuy livher/livhear!	'Good day!' (used around noon)
	Ngavuy tuhrav!	'Good afternoon!'
	Ngavuy limarog!	'Good evening!, Good night!'

Optionally, a possessive determiner with benefactive function (see §5.5.2) can be added to the end of the greeting to mark the recipient, as in (9-102a-d). These greetings can be heard both when people meet and when someone departs. The occasion is normally clear from the context; it can be otherwise marked in the sentence as *nogay* 'now' in (9-102d).

(9.102) a. *Nga-vuy   prahor   s-am!*
          3SG-be.good   morning   POSS.GNR-2SG
          'Good morning to you!'

    b. *Nga-vuy   tuhrav   sa-mru!*
          3SG-be.good   afternoon   POSS.GNR-2DU
          'Good afternoon to you two!'

     c. *Nga-vuy   livher   sa-mto!*
          3SG-be.good   noon   POSS.GNR-2PL
          'Good day to you all!'

    d. *Nga-vuy   sa-mto   nogay.*
          3SG-be.good   POSS.GNR-2PL   already
          'Have a good day now!' [71-850]

In more formal contexts and especially in religious contexts, the greeting *Atua ngarohroh drwan hayug!* is heard, meaning 'God bless you'.

(9.103) *Atua   nga-rohroh   drwan   hayug!*
          God   3SG-be.located   with   2SG
          'God bless you! (lit. [May] God be with you!)'

CHAPTER 10.   NEGATION

10.1   Introduction

There are several strategies to express negation in Ahamb. Different morphemes are involved in standard negation (negation of verbal declarative clauses), negative imperatives and clauses expressing *negative modalities* such as impossibility, inability and prevention. Furthermore, whole sentences or utterances can be negated by the negative prosentence *awa* 'no'. There is also a negative existential verb *jhay* 'not exist', and other inherently negative verbs.

The large range of structural domains for the expression of negation motivated a discussion of negation in a separate chapter. The following subsections describe in detail the different negation strategies mentioned above, as well as the attested negative polarity items in Ahamb.

In Ahamb, no lexical negation (deriving negative counterparts of nouns) has been attested and there are no special forms for negative pronouns and quantifiers.

10.2   Standard negation with *sba-*

The term *standard negation* has been used in the typological literature with a variety of definitions (Miestamo 2000; Dahl 2010). For the purposes of this discussion, standard negation is defined as the negation of verbal declarative clauses.

In Ahamb, standard negation is expressed with the prefix *sba-*, which immediately follows the subject index. The examples in (10.1) demonstrate a pair of an affirmative and a negative clause with standard negation.

(10.1)   a.   ***Na-****novkar   nahs-en   atëngel   ën   ato.*
              1SG-know   name-CNSTR   3PL   DIST   3PL
              'I know their names.' [10-52]

         b.   ***Në-sba-****novkar   nahs-en   naur   ën.*
              1SG-NEG-know   name-CNSTR   place   DIST
              'I don't know the name of that place.' [9-7]

Sba- is most commonly preceded by reduced allomorphs of the neutral subject indexes, featuring a short schwa vowel and characterised by palatalisation in the plural forms. These morphophonological processes were described in detail in §§8.2.1.2, 8.2.1.3. A full list of the combinations of subject indexes with *sba-* is presented in Table 8-3 in §8.2.1.3. The use of special subject indexes with *sba-* means that standard negation in Ahamb is asymmetrical as per the definition in Miestamo (2000).

The clauses listed in (10.2) exemplify the use of the standard negator with various subject indexes, with both active and stative verbs. In (10.2a), the subject is in the dual. Examples (10.2b-c) demonstrate the difference between first-person inclusive dual and plural subjects, which have lost their original distinguishing consonants – /r/ in the dual form was lost to haplology and /t/ in the plural form has merged with the /s/ of *sba-* resulting in a /tʃ/ sound. Example (10.2d) demonstrates the zero-subject marker in the third person singular. The clauses in (10.2e-f) feature a third-person plural subject index with or without the optional initial /a/.

(10.2) a. ***Aru   rë****-sba-vësan   ange.*
           3DU   3DU-NEG-teach   3SG
           'They did not teach him.' [67-11]

    b. *Drato   drë**jba**-lum-i.*
           1PL.INCL   1PL.INCL.NEG-plan-OBJ
           'We do not plan it.' [72-2]

    c. *Draru   drë**-sba**-novkar-e.*
           1DU.INCL   1DU.INCL-NEG-know-OBJ
           'The two of us did not know it.' [201-237]

    d. *Nman   s-ag   **sba**-vus.*
           chicken   POSS.GNR-1SG   NEG-be.few
           'I have many chickens (lit. My chickens aren't few.)' [34-158]

    e. *Gamuj   nren   a**jba**-yusum   selwog.*
           before   man   3PL.NEG-use   sailing canoe
           'In the past, people did not use sailing canoes.' [42-103]

    f. *Gamuj   **jba**-yusum   plen.*
           before   3PL.NEG-use   plane
           'In the past they did not use planes [for woodworking].' [42-18]

In Ahamb, subject indexes are generally optional, even if they are rarely omitted (see §8.1). In standard negation constructions, the subject indexes are regularly dropped for the singular and dual when the subject is specified or clear from the context:

(10.3) *Aru*   ***sba****-novkare*   *kar*   *nga-vi*   *narmaj.*
        3DU   NEG-know   COMP   3SG-COP   evil.spirit
        'The two of them didn't know that it was an evil spirit.' [9-61]

This type of *simple left internal negation*, where a single negator appears to the left of the verb, is typical of the languages of Southeast Malekula (Healey 2013; Hoback 2019; Williams 2019). Many other Malekula languages seem to employ a double negation strategy (Barbour 2015), which is also common in Oceanic languages (Mosel 1999; Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 51-52). Ahamb employs a double negation strategy for negating imperatives.

10.3   Negative imperative (prohibitive) with *be … jab*

Negative imperatives in Ahamb are formed with three components: the preverbal particle *be*, the neutral subject indexes, optionally followed by the subsequential marker *r-*, and the post-verbal particle *jab*. Examples (10.4a-b) demonstrate the difference between otherwise identical positive and negative imperative constructions. In (10.4c-d) the subject index is followed by *r-*. The use of *r-* in imperatives is logical since they normally refer to situations that follow the moment of speech. The position of *jab* is strictly at the end of the clause following any arguments or adjuncts, as demonstrated in (10.4d-g).

(10.4) a. *Ka-van!*
            2SG-go
            'Go!' [201-103]

        b. ***Be***   ***ka****-van* ***jab!***
            PROH1   2SG-go   PROH2
            'Don't go!' [53-28]

        c. ***Be***   ***mta****-**r**-pijpijvar*   ***jab!***
            PROH1   2PL-SBQT-swear   PROH2
            'Do not swear!' [108-167]

d. ***Be*** *mra-**r**-van* *vi* *ur* *ën* ***jab****!*
    PROH1   2DU-SBQT-go   go.to   place   DIST   PROH2
    'Don't go there!' [53-17]

e. ***Be*** *ka-ro-vnah* *nari* *sa* *nren* *mnaj* ***jab****!*
    PROH1   2SG-IPFV-steal   thing   CLF.GNR   man   different   PROH2
    'Do not steal other people's things.' [66-17]

f. ***Be*** *ka-rëng* *mato* *lön* *sabbin* ***jab!***
    PROH1   2SG-put   1PL.EXCL   LOCP   sin   PROH2
    'Do not lead us to sin!' [77-23]

g. ***Be*** *mta-kure* *bar-ën* *nga-r-blav* ***jab!***
    PROH1   2PL-make   head-3SG   3SG-SBQT-be.long   PROH2
    'Don't make his head long (referring to the practice of head binding)!' [15.1-27]

It is common for languages to negate imperatives using a strategy that is different from the standard negation strategy (Dahl 2010: 26-27; van der Auwera, Lejeune & Goussev 2013). A few Malekula languages have dedicated prohibitive constructions, usually involving special prohibitive markers. However, unlike Ahamb, related languages tend to pair prohibitive marking with irrealis subject indexes, e.g. Uluveu (Healey 2013: 182), Lamap (Williams 2019: 155), Denggan (B. Hoback, pers. comm. November 24, 2019), Uripiv (Moore 2019: 182). *Be* can combine with irrealis subject indexes in Ahamb to form other constructions. This is the topic of the next subsection.

10.4   Negative modality construcions – expression of impossibility, inability, prevention etc. with *be/bi*

The particle *be/bi* precedes a verb with irrealis subject indexing to express a number of different negative modalities that express impossibility, inability, prevention and related acts.[110] Such constructions are called *negative modality constructions* and the particle *be/bi* is glossed as NEGMOD in this work. No conclusive phonological or other patterns have been observed in the distribution of *be* and *bi* in negative modality constructions and the two particles appear to be in free variation in such constructions.

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[110] These constructions are usually translated into Bislama with the expression *no save* 'cannot, may not'. The Bislama verb *save* is also associated with permission and ability (Crowley 2004: 99).

Be appears in other semantically related constructions. The prohibitive construction involving *be* was discussed in §10.3. *Be* is also used to negate future tense expressed with *bar-* (see §8.2.1.2). *Bi* has not been attested in these two types of constructions. Future time with *rohbay* can be negated with *be* or *bi* (see §9.2.4.1). These uses will not be discussed further here.[111]

The main difference between negative modality constructions and standard negation constructions lies in the speaker's perception that the situation depends on factors in the environment, higher forces or fortune, rather than being a function of the actor's or experiencer's will or abilities, thus being outside of the actor's or experiencer's immediate control. In line with this, these constructions often appear in conditional sentences.

Corresponding affirmative constructions (expressing possibility, ability, encouragement) can be marked with the necessative marker *mas-* 'NEC' (8.2.1.5), the future marker *bar-* (see §8.2.1.2), lexical markers of future time, such as *rohbay* (see §9.2.4.1), with the verb *nov(l)kar* 'be able to, be possible, know', or with the positive imperative (see §9.4.1).

Examples of the different uses of negative modality constructions are given below, with short discussions of their functions and the examples' context where necessary.

10.4.1 Impossibility

The examples in (10.5) demonstrate the function of negative modality constructions to express the impossibility of an act occurring because of circumstances outside of one's control. In (10.5a), two children are telling their father that they cannot go to school because they do not have books. In (10.5b), the impossibility stems from the fact that there is a cultural taboo on the act (eating shark). In this sentence, the speaker means that the addressee cannot bring the shark meat home (and eat it) because his wife does not eat shark, due to a taboo. In (10.5c) the speaker refers to the fact that the person in question cannot be forgotten because of their influential work in the past, i.e. forgetting that person is impossible due to existing circumstances that cannot be controlled. In the conditional sentence in (10.5d) the speaker refers to a hypothetical impossibility of performing cash earning work, with the

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[111] The intentive mood marker *beay* (§9.2.4.4) is likely also a product of *be* and *ay*, which can function as a demonstrative or an emphatic marker. While *beay* carries a negative connotation in the sense that an action has not been performed yet, its main function is to express the intention to perform the action and as such it is not treated here as a negator.

particular reason being irrelevant but generally attributable to any unplanned preventions. In (10.5e), the use of negative modality refers to the uncertainty of the future outcome of a football game.

(10.5) a. *Lovuk   gan   maru   **bi**   **miri**-skul.*
            tomorrow   like.this   1DU.EXCL   NEGMOD   1DU.EXCL-go.to.school
            'Tomorrow we cannot go to school.' [55-5]

       b. *Hayug   **bi**   **ki**-han-i   mi   rben   a   penhayvur*
           2SG   NEGMOD   2SG.IRR-eat-OBJ   again   because   PERS   old.woman

           s-am   nga-kolkol   mahobër.
           POSS.GNR-2SG   3SG-put.taboo.on.food   shark
           'You too cannot eat it, because your wife does not eat shark.' [70-91]

       c. *Nalö-n   s-mato   **be**   **i**-pebëng-ni   mi.*
           thought-CNSTR   POSS.GNR-1PL.INCL   NEGMOD   3SG.IRR-forget-OBJ   again
           'We can never forget him.' [3-133]

       d. *Ur **bi**   **miti**-ji   maru,   **bi**   **miti**-visen   mani.*
           if   NEGMOD   1PL.INCL-shell.out   copra   NEGMOD   1PL.INCL.IRR-have   money
           'If we can't shell out copra, we can't have money.' [4.2-25]

       e. ***Drata**-r-win   je **be**   **driti**-win?*
           1PL.INCL-SBQT-win   or   NEGMOD   1PL.INCL.IRR-win
           'Are we going to win or are we not going (to be able) to win?' [60-116]

More specifically, negative modality can be used to refer to impossibility due to circumstances related to forces of nature. In (10.6a), weaving mats is impossible at noon because the heat makes the raw material (pandanus) too brittle. In (10.6b) it is the strong wind which makes it impossible to stand straight.

(10.6) a. *Prahor   ne   ka-tëga   naben,   drwan   tuhrav,*
            morning   LIM   2SG-hold   mat   and   afternoon

            *livher   **bi**   **ki**-tëga.*
            lunchtime   NEGMOD   2SG.IRR-hold
            'You only weave mats in the morning and in the afternoon, at lunch time you cannot weave [because it is too hot].' [7-114]

b. ***Bi***   ***mti**-rwag*   *nönör*   *taem*   *nrang*   *drës*
NEGMOD   2PL.IRR-stand.up   straight   when   wind   INDF

    nga-uvuv   *nga-drag.*
    3SG-blow   3SG-strong
    'You cannot stand up straight when there is a strong wind' [108-170]

Alternatively, the impossibility may reflect general knowledge:

(10.7)   *Ke naur*   *nga-r-mam*   *bël*   *nga-redrredr*   *ne,*   ***be***   ***i**-pangpang.*
        if   3SG-SBQT-be.ripe   but   3SG-be.white   LIM   NEGMOD   3SG.IRR-red
        'If [this type of banana] is ripe, it is white, it cannot be red.' [85-33]

When used with a first-person subject, negative modality constructions can have an additional connotation of a promise. The example in (10.8a) is taken from a children's story. The sentence is uttered by a whale to reassure a scared boy. In (10.8b) the speaker (a giant) says that he has given up on the idea to fight with the addressee's husband, due to the latter's perceived advantage.

(10.8)   a.   *Hana*   ***be***   ***ni**-haj*   *hayug.*
            1SG   NEGMOD   1SG.IRR-eat   2SG
            'I am not going to eat you.' [44-80]

      b.   *Hana*   ***be***   ***ni**-gmay*   *bar*   *drwan-i*   *mi,*
            1SG   NEGMOD   1SG.IRR-come   fight   with-OBJ   again

            be   ***ni**-ken*   *hayug*   *mi.*
            NEGMOD   1SG.IRR-take   2SG   again
            'I cannot come and fight with him anymore, I can no longer take you [as wife].' [47-114]

10.4.2 Prevention, necessity, instruction

Negative modality constructions are commonly used to express necessity, instruction, prevention or command. In (10.9a), the speaker talks about canoe construction and refers to the necessity of a delay in installing the canoe's cross beam on the day when it is cut. The negative modality construction in the first clause expresses negative necessity, while positive necessity is expressed with the necessative marker *mas-* in the second clause. In (10.9b) the negative modality construction expresses a necessary condition. In (10.9c) the speaker uses a

negative modality construction to provide instruction or to prevent the addressee from performing an act. In (10.9d), a negative modality construction is used to express a command.

(10.9) a. ***Bi***   ***ti****-rëng-i*   *lön*   *sem dei,*
NEGMOD   3PL.IRR-put-OBJ   LOCP   same day

ta-mas*-rëng-i*   *rohbay*   *nga-r-mëh.*
3PL-NEC-put-OBJ   in.future   3SG-SBQT-dry
'They may not put it on the same day, they must put it [aside] for it to dry [first].' [64-107]

b. *Ke*   *mata-r-palong-ni*   *kar*   *nga-r-blav,*
if   1PL.INCL-SBQT-want-OBJ   COMP   3SG-SBQT-be.long

be   ***miti****-jav*   *kuj*   *nasëbon.*
NEGMOD   1PL.INCL.IRR-cut   break.off   end
'If we want it to be long, we must not cut its end.' [7-32]

c. *Ka-gmay*   *nogha,*   ***be***   ***ki****-rohroh*   *mi.*
2SG-come   now   NEGMOD   2SG.IRR-stay   again
'Come now, you must no longer stay [here].' [35-178]

d. *Atua*   *nga-kare*   *kar,*   ***be***   ***driti****-vnah*
God   3SG-say   COMP   NEGMOD   1PL.INCL.IRR-steal

nari   *sa*   *nren*   *mnaj.*
thing   POSS.CLF.GNR   man   different
'God says that we must not steal other people's property.' [66-5]

10.4.3 Physical inability

Another common use of negative modality constructions is to express an inability to perform an action, often due to lack of physical strength or preparation. In (10.10a), the actors cannot climb the volcano because they are tired. In the conditional clause in (10.10b) the negative modality construction refers to a physical inability to bail out water from the canoe (the addressee is a child) rather than lack of willingness, given the emergency of the situation.

(10.10) a. ***Bi***   ***miti****-va-svoh*   *nvulkeno*   *mi,*
NEGMOD   1PL.INCL.IRR-GO-climb   volcano   again

mata-taet   *nog.*
1PL.EXCL-tired   already
'We cannot climb the volcano again, we are already tired.' [108-117]

b. *Naur* **bi** **ki-**yesyes *matmatu,*
   if   NEGMOD   2SG.IRR-bail.out   strong

drara-madrödr *nogha.*
1DU.INCL-sink   now
'If you cannot bail out the water [from the canoe] quickly, we are going to sink.' [56-33]

10.4.4 Status of *be/bi* as a freestanding morph

When *bi* is followed by the third-person singular irrealis index *i-*, one /i/ is dropped resulting in a single short /i/ vowel as in example (10.11a). Vowel elision across word boundaries is well attested in Ahamb (see §2.5.3.1), so this is not considered strong evidence for considering *bi* a bound morpheme. The elision of /i/ in this environment is the only attested morphophonological process involving *be/bi*. It is possible for *be/bi* to be fronted and appear before a nominal subject, as in (10.11b). Although this is uncommon, it provides evidence for treating *be/bi* as a freestanding morph. Besides, since it appears before the subject index, *be/bi* falls outside of the verb complex, as defined in §8.1.

(10.11) a. *Nren drës mi* **bi** *i-gmay*   (underlying form)
          Nren drës mi **bi** *gmay*   (surface form)
          man   INDF again NEGMOD (3SG.IRR)-come

          nge-r-kudrwan *drato.*
          nge-r-kudrwan *drato.*
          3SG.SEC-SBQT-help   1PL.INCL
          'No one can come and help us.' [76-24]

      b. **Be** *nren drës i-van* *vi* *ur* *lovuk.*
          NEGMOD man INDF 3SG.IRR-go go.to mainland tomorrow
          'Noone may go to the mainland tomorrow.' [235-28]

10.4.5 Negative modality constructions with archaic irrealis subject indexes

The less common archaic irrealis indexes have been attested in negative modality constructions:

(10.12) a. *Nga-vi* *pragin,* **be** **ku-**prag-ni.
          3SG-COP work   NEGMOD 2SG.IRR-do-OBJ
          'It is hard work, you cannot do it.' [58-116]

b. *Hana* ***be*** ***nu****-sar* *nari* *ngel ha* *s-ag.*
1SG NEGMOD 1SG.IRR-carry thing NSG DEM POSS.GNR-1SG
'I will not be able to carry all my things.' [93-31]

10.5 Negative answer *awa*

The pro-sentence *awa* [ˈawa] is used to answer a question in the negative as in (10.13a), reject a statement as in (10.13b) or express disagreement as in (10.13c). *Awa* can be used to answer both a positive and negative question with the same effect (10.13a-b). It can appear on its own or precede an elaboration of the answer, following a pause. The corresponding positive answer particle is *ee* [ˈeʔe] 'yes'.

(10.13) a. *"Dre-n* *hayug* ***sba****-tav?"*
blood-CNSTR 2SG NEG-run

Na-kar, *"**Awa**,* *dre-n* *hana* *sba-tav."*
1SG-say no blood-CNSTR 1SG NEG-run
'[He asked,] "You are not bleeding?" I said, "No I am not bleeding."' [36-60]

b. *Nga-kar,* *"Mru* *mra-mtan* *hanaw* *a?"* *Bël* *ara-kar,* *"**Awa**."*
3SG-say 2DU 2DU-hide 1SG Q but 3DU-say no
'He said, "You two are hiding from me, right?" But they said, "No."' [9-126]

c. *..be* *mri-van.* *Bël* *na-kar,*
NEGMOD 2DU.IRR-go but 1SG-say

*"**Awa**,* *nrang* *nga-r-mar* *mara-r-kors-i* *ne."*
no wind 3SG-SBQT-be.quiet 1DU.EXCL-SBQT-try-OBJ LIM
'…you cannot go. But I said, "No, the wind is quiet, we will just try it."' [56-21]

10.6 Negative existential *jhay*

Negative existentials form a separate grammatical and conceptual domain (Veselinova 2013b) and it is common for Oceanic languages to have a negative existential verb meaning 'not exist, there is/are not' (Mosel 1999). In Ahamb the verb *jhay* 'not exist' can be used to express the lack or non-existence of something. *Jhay* is likely a reflex of the POc and PNCV negative existential **tikai* (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 88; Clark 2009: 198). The pair of examples in (10.14) demonstrate the use of *jhay* and a corresponding affirmative expression, which is rephrased with the verb *kadr* 'have'.

(10.14) a. *Nvar* *nga-**jhay**.*
money 3SG-not.exist
'I don't have money (lit. There is no money.)' [234-119]

b. *Na-**kadr** nvar.*
1SG-have money
'I have money.' [234-120]

Jhay is also commonly used in impersonal clauses as in (10.15a-b). A corresponding affirmative expression can be rephrased with the positive existential verb *rohni* 'exist' as in (10.15c).

(10.15) a. *Naur mata-va-brah naur, nabut nga-**jhay**.*
when 1PL.EXCL-GO-reach place boat 3SG-not.exist
'When we reached the place, there was no boat [waiting for us].' [60-37]

b. *Mata-yusum van nga-**jhay** nog.*
1PL.EXCL-use go 3SG-not.exist already
'We used it [the wood] for a long time, and there is none left anymore.' [64-177]

c. *Nabe hën-i nga-**rohni**.*
song GNRP-OBJ 3SG-exist
'There is a song about it.' [15.1-177]

More rarely *jhay* can also appear in a reduplicated forms *jëjhay* and *jijhay*, as in (10.16a). The latter often appears in the compound noun *rijijhay* < *ri* 'thing' + *jijhay*, to denote an unsuccessful effort (10.16b).

(10.16) a. *Nga-sür-i nog ay, nga-**jëjhay***
3SG-burn-OBJ already EMP 3SG-not.exist
'He already burned it, it no longer exists.' [29-185]

b. *Mata-drëngdrëng **rijijhay** mëjba-rs-i mi.*
1PL.INCL-search.for no.success 1PL.INCL.NEG-see-OBJ again
'We searched for it without success, we never saw it again.' [93-51]

In Oceanic languages, negative existential constructions are often the same as the negative pro-sentence (Mosel 1999). In Ahamb, the negative pro-sentence *awa* cannot be used as a negative existential, but the third-person singular form of *jhay*, *nga-jhay*, can be used as a negative pro-sentence.

10.7   Other inherently negative verbs

Besides *jhay,* there are three other inherently negative verbs. These are listed in (10.17) with their positive counterparts. It is typologically common for the negative senses listed in (10.17) to be lexicalised (Veselinova 2013a). The examples in (10.18) demonstrate their use.

(10.17)	Inherently negative verbs in Ahamb		
	inherently negative verb	example	positive counterpart
	dras 'not able to, cannot' (prevention)	(10.18a)	*nov(l)kar* 'can, be able to'
	(ngot)ngot 'not want, not like (for food)'	(10.18b-d)	*palong* 'want, like'
	par 'not have'	(10.18e)	*kadr/visen* 'have'

(10.18) a. *Na-**dras**   na-r-paj.*
          1SG-not.able.to   1SG-SBQT-sleep
          'I could not sleep.' [36-78]

     b. *Na-**ngot**   hayug   nog.*
          1SG-not.like   2SG   already
          'I don't like you anymore.' [201-227]

     c. *Nwiski   aven   ata-mün-i   van   ata-**ngot**-ni.*
          whisky   REL   3PL-drink-OBJ   go   3PL-not.want-OBJ
          'The whisky, which they drank for a while, they did not want [anymore].' [91-55]

     d. *Ta-kar   na-r-vi   dekon,   na-kar   na-**ngot**.*
          3PL-say   1SG-SBQT-become   deacon   1SG-say   1SG-not.want
          'They asked me to become a deacon, but I said I didn't want to.' [96-42]

     e. *Mata-**par**   npaspot.*
          1PL.EXCL-not.have   passport
          'We don't have passports.' [18.1-170]

The clause in (10.18e) illustrates one way to encode the negation of predicative possession using the transitive verb *par* 'not have'. Another strategy, using the intransitive negative existential *jhay* in an impersonal construction was demonstrated in example (10.14a) in §10.6.

Inherently negative verbs can also be negated using either standard negation as in (10.19a), or a negative modality construction as in (10.19b).

(10.19) a. *Nga-vi nkanin aven nga-vuy, nren drës **sba-ngot**-ni.*
3SG-COP food REL 3SG-good man INDF NEG-not.like-OBJ
'It is good food, everyone likes it.'
(Lit: '…any/a person does not not like it.') [58-119]

b. *Ta-nov-ni kar nasëlvarin hën-i ... nga-r-jëjhay,*
3PL-think-OBJ COMP story GNRP-OBJ 3SG-SBQT-not.exist

***be** i-jëjhay.*
NEGMOD 3SG.IRR-not.exist
'They think that the memory of it is lost, [but] it cannot be lost.' [57-433]

10.8 Antiresultatives. Negative polarity items

Antiresultatives encode the non-completion of an action and include, among others, 'not-yet' and 'no-longer' expressions (Kozinskij 1988: 522-523). Some Oceanic languages are typologically interesting in that they encode 'not-yet' expressions by a special negator (Veselinova 2015). In Ahamb, 'not-yet' and 'no-longer' are expressed by negative polarity items which accompany other means of negation. The adverbs *rohjer* (with standard negation and inherently negative verbs, as in 10.20a-b)[112] and *kabël* (with negative modality constructions, as in 10.20c) are used to express 'not-yet'. The adverb *mi*, which normally means 'again', is used to express 'no-longer' (10.20d-f). 'No longer' expressions have also been attested as combinations of inherently negative verbs and *nog* 'already' as in (10.20g).

(10.20) a. *Vavu tötöt s-aru **sba**-ruru **rohjer**.*
grandfather POSS.GNR-3DU NEG-return yet
'Their grandfather has not come back yet.' [252-22]

b. *Lön taem in kava **jhay** **rohjer**.*
LOCP time DIST kava not.exist yet
'At that time there was no kava yet (= we were not planting and using kava yet).' [60-156]

c. ***Bi** **ni**-karkoj-ni vis-en hayug **kabël**.*
NEGMOD 1SG.IRR-tell-OBJ to-CNSTR 2SG yet
'I cannot tell you about it yet.' [34-214]

d. *Në-**sba**-varus toktokar **mi**.*
1SG-NEG-paddle fast again
'I was no longer paddling fast.' [48-94]

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[112] In affirmative sentences *rohjer* means 'still' (see §9.2.7).

e. **Drëjba**-*prag-ni*   **mi.**
   1PL.INCL.NEG-do-OBJ   again
   'We no longer do it.' [58-4]

f. **Be**   **miti**-*van*   *vi*   *ur*   *drës*   **mi.**
   NEGMOD   1PL.EXCL.IRR-go   go.to   place   INDF   again
   'We can no longer go anywhere.' [17-77]

g. **Nga-ngot**   *naur*   *ha*   **nog**.
   3SG-not.like   place   PROX   already
   'He no longer likes this place.' [14-52]

10.9   Summary of negation strategies

Table 10-1 provides a summary of negation strategies in Ahamb.

Table 10-1. Summary of negation strategies

type of negation	form
Standard negation	reduced subject index + *sba-* (palatalisation in plural)
Prohibitives	*be* + neutral subject index + *jab*
Negative modality	*be/bi* + irrealis subject index
Negative answer	*awa*
Negative existential	*jhay*
Inherently negative verbs	*dras* 'not able to, cannot' (prevention)
	ngot(ngot) 'not want, not like (for food)'
	par 'not have'

CHAPTER 11.   SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTIONS (SVCS)

11.1   Introduction

The previous two chapters described the structure of clauses that contain a single verb. Ahamb allows sequences of more than one verb in a single clause, and the current chapter deals with such cases using the term *serial verb constructions* (SVC) which has been widely used in the typological and Oceanic literature (e.g. Crowley 2002; Bril & Ozanne-Rivierre 2004; Aikhenvald & Dixon 2006; Haspelmath 2016). The constructions that are discussed in this chapter are not complex clauses; SVCs comprise two verbal constituents in a single clause that share at least one argument. Semantically, they normally represent a single event.[113]

SVCs are common in the languages of Malekula as well as in Oceanic languages in general (Crowley 2002; Bril & Ozanne-Rivierre 2004). SVCs are normally divided into nuclear SVCs and core SVCs. Both types of SVCs have been attested in Ahamb.

In nuclear SVCs the verbs share subject and object (where relevant) and the verb stems are contiguous, that is, there is no intervening morphology between them. The subject is marked on the first verb (V1) and any object follows the second verb (V2). Normally both verbs in a nuclear SVC are prototypical verbs. In Ahamb, there is a small closed class of non-prototypical verbs that appear in nuclear serialisation-like constructions. Such lexemes are referred to here as *coverbs* and the constructions that they form – as *coverbal SVCs*. Prototypical and coverbal nuclear SVCs in Ahamb are the topic of §11.2.

In core SVCs there is a looser juncture between the verbs. Subject marking can be identical on both verbs, as in same-subject SVCs. Another subtype of core SCVs, where the object of V1 serves as the subject of V2, are switch-function SVCs. In ambient SVCs, V2 modifies the entire proposition of V1. Ahamb does not have prototypical same-subject SVCs, but has both switch-function and ambient SVCs (§11.3).

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[113] The concept of single eventhood is somewhat subjective (Aikhenvald 2006: 10; Haspelmath 2016: 306) and here it is used in a broad sense.

The level of juncture between the verbs varies according to type of SVCs. While nuclear SVCs are clearly far to the left in the continuum presented in Figure 9-1 in §9.1, the juncture between the verbs in core SVCs is looser due to the intervening morphology.

11.2   Nuclear SVCs

In terms of form, nuclear SVCs in Ahamb consist of two verbal forms that are contiguous – they are directly adjacent to each other with no intervening morphology between them, and there is no intonation suggesting coordination. The combination of the two verbs expresses a single event and the whole construction has one set of arguments. The subject of a nuclear SVC precedes V1. As with any Ahamb verb (see §7.1), an overt nominal subject may precede V1. A subject index, albeit not compulsory, is very commonly prefixed to V1. Any prefixed modifiers precede V1. For transitive verbs, the object can be expressed by an object pro-index attached to V2 or a freestanding nominal object following V2 (see §8.6). The form of a nuclear SVC in Ahamb is summarised in (11.1).

(11.1)	(nominal subject)	[subject index]-[prefixed modifiers]-V1	V2-[object pro-index]
			V2 [freestanding object]
			V2 (intransitive)

In his cross-linguistic definition of serial verbs, Haspelmath (2016: 302-304) proposes that all verbs in a SVC must be independent verbs, meaning that "they can express a dynamic event without any special coding in predication function and […] can occur in a non-elliptical utterance without another verb." Haspelmath allows for a looser definition of SVCs from a language-specific point of view. Components of serialisation-like constructions that do not behave as prototypical verbs have been referred to as *coverbs* in the descriptions of different languages, mostly of East Asia (e.g. Clark 1975; Thepkanjana 1986; Lord 1993; Matthews 2006) and Northern Australia (e.g. Schultze-Berndt 2000: 69; Baker & Harvey 2010; Krauße 2020).

In Ahamb there is a small class of forms, which only appear in the V2 position of constructions that are very similar to nuclear SVCs. These forms are not attested with subject indexes or other prefixed modifiers as independent verbs, and thus do not conform to the

definition of prototypical verbs in §7.1.[114] These forms, however, have a verb-like meaning. This functional and distributional pattern is similar to that of coverbs in other languages where this term is used (especially in the East Asian context) and the term *coverb* will therefore be adopted here for these lexemes in Ahamb. Ahamb's coverbs are commonly followed by a nominal object or take a suffixed object pro-index. In this sense they resemble prototypical transitive verbs and are unlike, for example, postverbal adverbs, which cannot take any inflection (see §8.5). The connection between coverbs and adverbs is explored in detail in §11.2.2.2. Coverbs differ from verb-like prepositions (see §9.2.5.2) in that they cannot appear outside of the nucleus (see §11.2.2.1 for a detailed discussion). Some synchronic verb forms that are related to coverbs may suggest that coverbs used to be fully functioning verbs in the past (see §11.2.2.3). The following subsections describe prototypical nuclear SVCs and *coverbal SVCs*[115] in detail.

11.2.1 Prototypical nuclear SVCs

The clauses in (11.2) illustrate prototypical nuclear SVCs, where both verbs can also function as independent verbs in simple clauses. In all examples in (11.2), V1 is preceded by a subject index. In (11.2d-e) a nominal subject is also specified. Negation and other prefixed verb modification is demonstrated in (11.2a-b,e-f). The resulting SVC can be intransitive as in (11.2c,e), or transitive as in (11.2a-b,d,f-g). The SVC in (11.2f) has a nominal object while in (11.2a-b,d,g), the object is expressed by an object pro-index on V2. Semantically, a nuclear SVC is a function of the separate meanings of the two verbs. For example, in (11.2g) the term 'reserve (a room in a hotel)' consists of the verbs *ujuj* 'call (by phone)' and *gurgur* 'prepare'.

(11.2)   a.   *Nga-ro-**kar**   **husür**-i.*
           3SG-IPFV-say   follow-OBJ
           'He talks about it.' [20-46]

       b.   *Mrë-sba-**palong**   **husür**-i   kiaha.*
           2DU-NEG-hear   follow-OBJ   today
           'You two did not obey [the advice] today.' [40-119]

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[114] Forms that appear in V2 position similar constructions but no longer behave like prototypical verbs have been attested in other Vanuatu languages, e.g. South Efate (Nafsan) (Thieberger 2007: 229).

[115] While acknowledging the fact that these constructions are not prototypical nuclear SVCs, based on the evidence provided in this section, it was considered most appropriate to place the discussion of coverbs in the serialisation context.

c. *Tenkiu   habat   rben   mta-**gmay**   **jarpoh**.*
   Thanks   much   because   2PL-come   appear
   'Thank you very much for showing up.' [71-499]

d. *Naur   ki-n   woy   nga-**gam**   **pës**-i.*
   place   DIM-DEM   water   3SG-run   surround-OBJ
   'This place is surrounded by water.'
   (lit.: 'This place, water surrounds it.') [25-19]

e. *Nabon   nga-ro-**jar**   **uv**   nogay.*
   smell   3SG-IPFV-spear   blow   already
   '[The laplap's] smell is seeping out [through its banana leaf wrap] already.' [73-45]

f. *Mëjba-**kaykay**   **pëpëh**   drato.*
   1PL.EXCL.NEG-call   separate   1PL.INCL
   'We will not summon each one of us separately.' [71-99]

g. *Nrum   aven   mata-**ujuj**   **gurgur**-ni…*
   room   REL   1PL.EXCL-call   prepare-OBJ
   'The room which we reserved …' [18.1-151]

In example (11.2c) above, V1 – *gmay* 'come' – denotes prior motion towards the speaker or the deictic centre. *Van* 'go' can be used in the same way to denote prior motion away from the speaker or deictic centre, as in (11.3). This type of construction involving prior motion is, however, not common. Prior motion is encoded more commonly with sequential event constructions (SECs) (see §13.3) or with the help of the prefixed modifier *va-* (see §8.3).

(11.3) *Ara-**van**   **rwag**   ai.*
        3DU-go   stand   there
        'They went and stood there.' [22-19]

Some independent verbs tend to appear more commonly than others as V2 of nuclear SVCs. Three such verbs are listed in (11.4) with examples of nuclear SVCs and their meanings.

(11.4)

Fully functional verbs that tend to appear as V2 of nuclear SVCs	
V2	example nuclear SVCs
rës 'see'	*tëga(w)* [hold] *rës* 'feel (sth by touch)'
	han [eat] *rës* 'taste (food)'
	mün [drink] *rës* 'taste (drink)'
	kor [make, do] *rës* 'try'
	varus [paddle] *rës* 'try to paddle [and see what happens]'
ruru 'return'	*gam* [run] *ruru* 'run back'

(both as TR and INTR)	*varus* [paddle] *ruru* 'paddle back'
	ruj [move] *ruru* 'move back'
	lëv [pull] *ruru* 'pull back'
	rav [take] *ruru* 'bring back'
	ken [take] *ruru* 'accept back'
	fosem [force] *ruru* 'force back'
husür 'follow'	*palong* [listen; feel] *husür* 'obey, trust'
	kar [say] *husür* 'talk about'
	tëga(w) [hold] *husür* 'adopt'

The semantic contribution of the verbs in (11.4) to the SVC is relatively transparent. In the case of *rës* 'see', it contributes a meaning of trying or checking. In the first three examples with *rës*, the SVC has a purely sensory meaning, whereas the last two refer to trying an action to see whether it delivers an expected result. The verb *ruru* 'return' can appear as both a transitive and an intransitive verb and it specifies a movement back to a location or recipient. The verb *husür* 'follow' also specifies movement, although in the attested nuclear SVCs (see also 11.2a-b above), the nature of the movement in the SVC's meaning is metaphoric.

The examples in (11.2-11.4) show that there is a clear tendency for verbs of motion to appear as V2 of nuclear SVCs. In the typological literature SVCs are classified as symmetrical and asymmetrical according to the semantic and grammatical properties of the verbs involved in the constructions, with asymmetrical SVCs including "a verb from a grammatically or semantically restricted class (e.g. a motion or posture verb)" (Aikhenvald 2006: 3). The examples above show that nuclear SVCs in Ahamb can be symmetrical, where both elements are prototypical verbs (e.g. *ujuj gurgur* [call prepare] 'reserve' in 11.2g), or asymmetrical, e.g. where one verb is verb of motion, as in the majority of the examples discussed above.

11.2.2 Coverbal SVCs

The attested coverbs in Ahamb are listed in (11.5) with some examples of coverbal SVCs that they appear in. Coverbal SVCs are normally transitive. A few of the coverbs can appear in both simplex and reduplicated form. The coverbs' object pro-index is given in brackets after their form. The stem vowels of the coverb *por(por)* 'break' change to /u/ when the object pro-index *-e* is added (see §2.5.7). Examples of clauses with coverbs are given in (11.6).

(11.5)   Coverbs in Ahamb

coverb	combinations with other verbs
por(por)[116] ~ *pur(pur)e*	*kaj* [bite] *por* 'break by biting'
	jav [cut] *por* 'split/cut'
	ji [cut, shell out] *por* 'scoop off'
	tar [tear] *por* 'tear apart'
	tüs [tear (along long side)] *por* 'tear in two'
	jar [spear] *por* 'break by spearing'
	tëh [hit] *por* 'smash'
kuj(kuj)(-i) 'break off'	*jav* [cut] *kuj* 'break (e.g. cloth, carrot)'
	tar [tear] *kuj* 'tear apart (e.g. rope)'
	lav[117] [transfer?] *kuj* 'break in two, sever (e.g. relationship)'
	tëh [hit] *kuj* 'break by hitting (e.g. cloth)'
	jar [spear] *kuj* 'break with a sharp object'
krov(-i) 'cross, break through'	*lav* [transfer?] *krov* 'cross, go through sth'
	yong [wade] *krov* 'wade across (water, sea)'
	van [go] *krov* 'walk across sth'
	has [no independent meaning] *krov* 'go across sth'
bbën(bbën)(-i) 'kill, eliminate'[118]	*tams* [hit] *bbën* 'kill by hitting'
	kaj [bite] *bbën* 'kill by biting'
	pen [shoot] *bbën* 'kill by shooting'
	jar [spear] *bbën* 'kill by spearing'
	jav [cut] *bbën* 'kill by cutting'
	tah [tie] *bbën* 'kill by tightening a rope around'
	dri [turn] *bbën* 'switch off (e.g. light, water, music)'
	maj [die] *bbën* 'die irreversibly'[119]
kuv(kuv)(-i) 'remove'	*paj* [carry] *kuv* 'take out/away'
	sar [carry] *kuvkuv* 'take out/away'
	plëv [pull] *kuv* 'pull out'
	sev [shave] *kuvkuv* 'shave off'
	yesyes [scoop out] *kuv* 'scoop liquid out, bail out (e.g. water from vessel)'
	ppur [pay, buy] *kuv* 'buy out'
	rav [take] *kuv* 'take out'
	ken [take] *kuv* 'take out'

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[116] *Por* is homophonous with the fully functioning independent verb *por* 'spread, make (for bed)', which takes the object index *-ni*.

[117] *Lav* has not been attested as an independent verb outside of the coverbal SVCs *lav kuj* 'break in two, sever' and *lav krov* 'cross go through'. It may have provided diachronic input for the initial part of verbs such as *lapor* 'break', *labur* 'break' and *labbën* 'kill' (see §11.2.2.3).

[118] *Bbën(bbën)* refers to an animate object definitively losing its life. Its use suggests that the speaker is sure the object is completely dead and does not just appear lifeless.

[119] *Maj bbën* 'die irreversibly' differs from the other constructions because it is intransitive with the undergoer in the subject position, whereas in the other constructions with *bbën* the subject is the actor. *Maj bbën* is less commonly attested in the corpus than the transitive constructions. It has been attested in the speech of three older speakers. The verb *maj* 'die' is more commonly used on its own to refer to dying. *Maj bbën* has a somewhat emphatic meaning focusing on the fact that the object is irreversably dead.

	uv [blow] *kuv* 'blow away'
	tëh [hit] *kuv* 'hit out'
	vrëj [peel] *kuv* 'peel off'
	pnaj [weed] *kuv* 'weed out'
	jav [cut] *kuv* 'cut out'
koj(-ni) 'figure out, inspect' (cognitive functions)	*rës* [see] *koj* 'recognise (when looking at sth)'
	nov [think] *koj* 'consider'
	kar [say] *koj* 'announce, state (a truth)'
gwan(-i) 'tighten (also figuratively)'	*kaj* [bite] *gwan* 'bite on sth and hold tight'
	paj [sleep] *gwan* 'sleep with one's limbs around sth'
	pës [tie] *gwan* 'tie tightly'
	tah [tie] *gwan* 'tie tightly'
	tëga [hold] *gwan* 'hold tight'
	pen [shoot] *gwan* 'shoot sth with an arrow and fix it in place'
	kabur [cover] *gwan* 'cover tightly'
jur(-i) 'bring down'	*kob* [stone] *jur* 'stone (e.g. fruit) down'
	uv [blow] *jur* 'blow down (for wind)'
	jëh [poke with stick] *jur* 'poke (e.g. fruit) down (with a stick)'
	jah [pull] *jur* 'pull down'

(11.6) a. *Ka-r-**jav***   ***pur-e***   *lön*   *mataw.*
          2SG-SBQT-cut   break-OBJ   LOCP   axe
          'You split it (a coconut) with an axe.' [4-47]

    b. *...nge-r-**jav***   ***kuj***   *karot*   *ili*   *naur*   *nga-ru.*
          3SG.SEC-SBQT-cut   break   carrot   ANA   place   3SG-be.two
          '…then he cut the carrot in two pieces [using a knife].' [504-35]

    c. *Nga-r-**yong***   ***krov-i***   *van*   *vi*   *ur.*
          3SG-SBQT-wade   cross-OBJ   go   go.to   shore
          'He waded across it to the shore.' [34-94]

    d. *Ange*   *mjëg*   *nga-**pen***   ***bbën-i***   *nh-en.*
          3SG   then   3SG-shoot   kill-OBJ   POSS.ALIM-3SG
          'He then shoots dead (the fish) for himself [to eat].' [112-40]

    e. *Ta-ro-**yesyes***   ***kuv***   *nwoy.*
          3PL-IPFV-scoop.out   remove   water
          'They are scooping the water out.' [51-67]

f. *Mta-mas-**nov** **koj*** *a* *vavu kakav* *ngail.*
2PL-NEC-think inspect PERS grandmother NSG
'You must think about the old ladies.' [71-829]

g. *Garav* *nga-**kaj*** ***gwan**-i.*
clamshell 3SG-bite tighten-OBJ
'The clamshell shut itself tight around it [a hand].' [30-177]

h. *Nrang* *be* *i-gmay* ***uv*** ***jur*** *drato.*
wind NEGMOD 3sg.irr-come blow down 1PL.INCL
'The wind won't be able to come and blow us off our feet.' [103-16]

The coverbs listed above function prosodically as one unit with the preceding verb stem and any affixes. Some phonological processes have been attested in more commonly used coverbal constructions. For example, where *jav* 'cut' appears as V1 (*jav kuj, jav por* and *jav kuv*) the final /v/ in *jav* is commonly deleted. The common coverbal construction *tëga gwan* 'hold tight' commonly undergoes haplology and results in the compound-like form *tagwan.*

11.2.2.1   Connection between coverbs and verb-like prepositions: The case of **gor** '(c)over'

Verb-like prepositions in Ahamb (see §9.2.5.2) resemble coverbs in that they cannot independently take prefixed modifiers, but their object can be expressed through a suffixed object pro-index. Semantically, they also appear to be similar – verbal meanings can usually be framed as prepositional meanings (i.e. to fit the semantic frameworks normally associated with prepositions, e.g. location, movement).[120] For example, the coverb *kuv* 'remove' can be perceived as a preposition meaning 'off of, away from'.

Coverbs and verb-like prepositions, however, differ in that coverbs always immediately follow another verb in the verb nucleus while verb-like prepositions can occur outside of the verb complex. The coverbs listed in (11.5) have never been attested outside of the nucleus in the corpus and Ahamb speakers have consistently evaluated examples with them appearing

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[120] An overlap between coverbs and prepositions has been reported for other languages, e.g. Cantonese (Matthews 2006: 70-71) and languages of Vanuatu, such as Paamese (Crowley 2002: 120) and Vurës, (Malau 2016: 608-615), where "second minor verbs" of SVCs are grammaticalised to verbal prepositions. Lehmann (2015: 111-115) investigates the historical relationship between coverbs (including in East Asian languages) and adpositions from a typological perspective.

outside of the nucleus as ungrammatical. Coverb candidates that can appear outside of the nucleus have therefore been treated as verb-like prepositions.

This distinction between coverb and verb-like preposition is not always straightforward, in the sense that some verb-like prepositions more commonly appear outside of the verb nucleus than others. For example, *gor* (*gur-e* with the object pro-index), which has the prepositional meaning 'over' and the verbal meaning 'cover, block', appears almost exclusively within the nucleus, but its status as a preposition was motivated by only a few examples of it appearing outside of the nucleus. Out of 105 occurrences in the corpus, in 97 it occurs directly following another verb in a coverbal SVC-like construction. The attested combinations of verb+*gor* are listed in (11.7). The examples in (11.8) demonstrate its use.

(11.7)	Attested combinations of verbs immediately followed by *gor* 'over'
	karkarëv [watch] *gor* 'watch over, take care of'
	kor [make] *gor* 'block'
	kodr [shut, close] *gor* 'block, close' (often merged as *kogor*)
	blok [block] *gor* 'block'
	kabur [cover] *gor* 'cover (with a lid or similar)'
	roh [be located] *gor* 'block, be in the way of'
	gam [chase] *gor* 'chase everyone down'
	varus [paddle] *gor* 'block one's way with a canoe'
	tamës [hit] *gor* 'block (e.g. fish inside a pool) by hitting (the water)'
	rwag [stand up] *gor* 'block by standing'
	kayrmar / pre [pray] *gor* 'pray for (the protection of sth)'
	ppur [trade, buy] *gor* 'reserve something by paying a deposit'
	ponpon [be.dusk] *gor* '(night) falls on (someone, e.g. trapping them in a location)'
	rerer [be.strong (wind)] *gor* 'prevent from traveling (for strong wind)'

(11.8) a. *Nga-**karkarëv** **gor**   nabrav   in.*
          3SG-watch   (c)over   breadfruit   DIST
          'He takes care of the breadfruit tree.' [45-9]

      b. *Drata-**rwag**   **gor**   nadrung   naur   aven   nga-ro-tavtav*
          1PL.INCL-stand   (c)over   pool   place   REL   3SG-IPFV-flow

          vi   ras.
          go.to   sea
          'We stand guard at the place where the seawater is flowing out of the pool [trapping the fish inside].' [61-41]

In the other eight of the 105 occurrences of *gor* in the corpus, *gor* immediately follows the object of another verb as in examples (11.9a-b). In all examples, V1 is a transitive verb and its object acts as the subject of *gor*, which resembles a switch-function SVC. However, in Ahamb's switch-function SVCs, V2 is most commonly marked with a subject index (see §11.3.1), while *gor* has never been attested with a subject index.

(11.9)   a.   *Ta-va-kor*   **kayrmarin**   ***gur**-e.*
              3PL-GO-make   prayer   (c)over-OBJ
              'They go pray for them (referring to a ceremony where new yams are blessed).' [58-47]

         b.   *Ta-r-**bën-i***   *gor*   *nhaw   ili.*
              3PL-SBQT-bend-OBJ   (c)over   rope   ANA
              'They fold [the sail] over the rope.' [64-232]

11.2.2.2   *Connection between coverbs, adverbs and quantifiers: The case of* **par** *'already; every; to complete'*

The lexeme *par* has a number of functions. It has been attested as a quantifier and as a regular adverb on its own, although in those functions it more commonly appears in the complex forms *parne* 'all, every' and *parnog* 'already' respectively (see §§4.9, 9.2.7). In §8.5, *par* was described as a post-verbal adverb, meaning that it can occur within the verb complex, between the verb and the object (pro-index). *Par* can also appear outside of the nucleus as an adverb (see §9.2.7) and is therefore not a suitable coverb candidate. However, constructions where *par* appears within the nucleus resemble coverbal SVC constructions, where *par* is in the V2 position as a hypothetical coverb meaning 'finish, complete'. (*Par* cannot be treated as a regular verb because it cannot appear as an independent verb on its own.)[121]

The three examples in (11.10) demonstrate the use of *par* in coverbal SVC-like constructions where its verbal, adverbial and quantifier meanings overlap (as reflected in the glosses). In (11.10a) there is a clear semantic overlap between the perfective and quantifying function. Syntactically, quantifiers normally follow the noun they modify, so treating *par* as a quantifier here would not be well motivated. In the clause in (11.10b), *par* can be treated as a marker of perfective aspect. The clause in (11.10c) is already modified by the adverb *nog* 'already'. Non-contiguous double marking with adverbs meaning 'already' (see §9.2.7) is not

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[121] *Par*, with the meanings described here is treated as a form that is distinct from the independent verbs *par* 'not have' (§10.7) and *parpar* 'be clear'.

otherwise commonly attested, which means that treating *par* as a (co)verb in (11.10c) is a reasonable analysis.

(11.10) a. *Nam*　　　*nga-**kaj**　**bbënbbën**　**par**　　　　*ato.*
　　　　　mosquito　3SG-bite　kill　　　complete/already　3PL
　　　　　'They all died of mosquito-borne diseases.' [111-44]

　　　b. *Hayug*　**gmay**　**pësah**　**par**　　　　*is-am!*
　　　　　2SG　　come　give　complete/already　POSS.PRN-2SG
　　　　　'You come tell your [story] (lit. come give yours)!' [93-1]

　　　c. *Mahobër*　*nga-**han**　**par**-ni*[122]　　**nog.**
　　　　　shark　　3SG-eat　complete-OBJ　already
　　　　　'The shark already ate (finished) all of [the fish].' [10-53]

11.2.2.3　*Independent verbs related to coverbs*

As per their definition, coverbs cannot appear as independent verbs. However, of the coverbs listed in (11.5), *por(por)* 'break', *kuv(kuv)* 'remove', *krov* 'cross, break through' and *jur* 'bring down' have been attested with the valency decreasing prefix *ma-*, forming intransitive verbs: *mapor(por)* 'be broken', *makuv(kuv)* 'be removed/out/away', *ma(kë)krov* 'be broken, be severed, be interrupted'[123], *majur* 'descend, set (for sun), go out (for tide)'.[124] Valency decreasing with *ma-* was described in detail in §7.7. This strategy is not considered synchronically productive and therefore these forms are not treated as the product of inflection but as separate lexical items. However, they suggest that coverbs may have been fully functioning independent verbs in the past.

On a similar note, the fully functioning independent transitive verbs *labbën(bbën)* 'kill' and *lapor(por)* (*lapur(pur)e* with the object pro-index) 'break' are clearly related to the coverbs *bbën(bbën)* 'kill, eliminate' and *por(por)* 'break, compromise the unity of'.[125] They are used

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[122] If *par* is considered an adverb here, *par* and *ni* would normally be spelled separately in this case (see §8.6). Besides, similar (but intransitive) constructions are probably the origin of the complex adverb *parnog* 'already'.

[123] The partially reduplicated form *këkrov* has not been attested as a variant of the coverb *krov*.

[124] In Vurës, another Vanuatu language, verbs related to breaking – *lēt* 'break, snap' and *wor* 'break, shatter' – normally occur as V2 of SVCs and can take the detransitivising suffix *mO-*, which is a reflex of POc *ma-*, presenting a scenario similar to that of Ahamb's coverbs that are discussed here (Malau 2016: 150-151).

[125] Another transitive verb, *labur* 'break' is similarly related to the independent transitive verb *bur* 'break', which can serve as V2 in nuclear SVCs.

to refer to the acts of breaking or killing when further details about the acts are unknown or irrelevant (in contrast with the respective coverbal SVCs). The example in (11.11) is taken from a story about a historical epidemic of a mosquito-borne disease, which killed many people on Malekula. In this case, the choice of the verb *labbënbbën* may be due to the fact that the cause of death is already known, or to the fact that the speaker may not have immediately found a suitable V1 candidate for a cause of death related to a mosquito-borne disease.

(11.11) *Nga-labbënbbën   a   man   Malekula   ngail.*
         3SG-kill   PERS   man   M.   NSG
         'It killed the people of Malekula.' [111-23]

The initial *la-* of these verbs cannot be directly attributed to a synchronic morpheme. However, in his grammar of the closely related Uluveu language, Healey (2013: 206) describes a prefix *la-* which derives independent verb stems, including from roots that appear to be cognates with Ahamb's *por* and *bur*. The Uluveu examples are *la-b̃ur-i* 'break' from *b̃ur-i* 'break' and *la-p̃ul-i* 'split open' from *p̃ul-i* 'split'. Healey analyses the origin of this prefix in Uluveu as lexicalisation of the transitive verb *lav-i* 'transfer', which in Uluveu occurs as V1 of nuclear SVC-like constructions. It is possible that Ahamb's *la-* verbs are also lexicalisations of Ahamb's verb *lav*, which has only been attested in V1 position in coverbal SVCs, see (11.5) and Footnote 117 in §11.2.2.

11.3   Core SVCs

While in nuclear-level serialisation the two verbs are contiguous with no intervening morphology, serialisation on the level of the predicate core means that some morphology, normally subject and object marking, can appear between the two verbs. Core SVCs are widely attested among the languages of Vanuatu (Crowley 2002; Bril & Ozanne-Rivierre 2004; Barbour 2012: 330-356)**.** There are two types of core SVCs attested in Ahamb: switch-function SVCs, where the object of the first verb co-refers to the subject of the second verb, and ambient SVCs where V2 modifies the entire proposition of V1, including its arguments.

In the languages of Vanuatu, there is another widespread type of core-level serialisation – same-subject SVCs, where the two verbs share only a subject, which is normally marked on both verbs. For example, in same-subject SVCs in Neverver, V2 is often a verb of movement,

location, direction or utterance (Barbour 2012: 340-349). In his work on serialisation in Mwotlap, a Northern Vanuatu language, François (2005: 6) states that same-subject serial verbs "always refer to concurrent, complementary facets of a single event, never to successive actions."

The sentence in (11.12a) shows two verbs that share a subject, which is marked on both verbs (with a subject index), a structure which resembles same-subject SVCs in other Vanuatu languages. However, in examples like this in Ahamb the two predicates normally refer to two separate events and are better treated as two juxtaposed clauses rather than as an instance of serialisation. Ahamb has a special way to express sequential events (similar to those in 11.12a), that speakers perceive to form a single event package by using sequential event subject indexes (see §13.3). In (11.12b), the two verbs share a subject, which is marked on both verbs and the two verbs clearly denote a single event. However, the use of the inflected form of the verb *kar* to introduce direct speech is well attested as a variant of the complementiser *kar*, which is most likely the product of a historical process of grammaticalisation (see §12.4). Even if other Malekula languages tend to employ same-subject SVCs in their repertoires of serialisation strategies, it appears that in Ahamb, the function of same-subject SVCs is dispersed over a number of different strategies of encoding clauses with multiple verbs.

(11.12) a. ***Ata-r-gurgur   ata-r-pësah   *** *narbaruh.*
             3PL-SBQT-prepare   3PL-SBQT-give   girl
             'They will prepare [and] they will give away the bride.' [74-69]

         b. *A   tete   ili   ****nga-dram   nga-kar****, "Uy!"*
             PERS   child   ANA   3SG-answer   3SG-say   ITJ
             'The child then answered, "Oh!"' [116-84]

11.3.1 Switch-function SVCs

In switch-function core SVCs, V1 is a transitive verb. The participant encoded as the object of V1 also serves as the subject of V2. Such constructions are widespread in Oceanic and other Vanuatu and Malekula languages (Crowley 2002; Barbour 2012: 349). Switch-function SVCs commonly encode causative/resultative constructions:

(11.13) a. *Niar   ngar-**sün-i**$_i$ **nga**$_i$**-r-mes**.*
             sun   3SG-SBQT-burn-OBJ   3SG-SBQT-be.dry
             'The sun will burn it dry.' [7-16]

b. *Tete   ili   nga-**bël**   [**navüj   ili**]ᵢ   **ngaᵢ-roh**.*
   child   ANA   3SG-throw   banana   ANA   3SG-be.located
   'The child threw the banana on the ground.' [116-91]

c. *Narbaruh   ili   nga-**tams**   [**a   tete   ili**]ᵢ   **ngaᵢ-rang**.*
   girl   ANA   3SG-hit   PERS   child   ANA   3SG-cry
   'The girl hit the childᵢ [and] she (the child)ᵢ cried.' [116-69]

d. *Ka-r-**kas**   **matoᵢ**   **mataᵢ-r-parpar**.*
   2SG-SBQT-wash   1P.EXCL   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-be.clean
   'You wash us clean.' [28-24]

e. *Var   iha   ne   ta-**prag-niᵢ**   **ngaᵢ-vi**   nmataw.*
   stone   PROX   DIM   3PL-make-OBJ   3SG-become   axe
   'Just this stone here, they shaped it like an axe.' [32-62]

It is possible for V1 of a switch-function SVC to be a nuclear SVC:

(11.14) a. *Na-mas-[**lëv   ruru**]ₙᵤ𝒸-niᵢ   **ngaᵢ-r-gmay**.*
          1SG-NEC-pull   return-OBJ   3SG-SBQT-come
          'I must pull him back here.' [23-93]

b. *Ange   nga-[**tams   bbën**]ₙᵤ𝒸   **hanaᵢ**   **naᵢ-r-maj**.*
   3SG   3SG-hit   eliminate   1SG   1SG-SBQT-die
   'He beat me to death.' [47-51]

The example below is very similar to switch-function SVCs but it contains an adjunct, which intervenes between the object of the first verb and the subject of the second verb. Thus, the two verbs do not appear within the same core and this example is treated as coordination:

(11.15) *Hana   na-r-vën   is-ag   lön   navodr   s-ag*
        1SG   1SG-SBQT-shoot   POSS.GNR-1SG   LOCP   water.hole   POSS.GNR-1SG

        ne   nga-r-maj.
        LIM   3SG-SBQT-die
        'I will just shoot mine [my fish] in my water hole [and] it will die.' [112-45]

11.3.2 Ambient SVCs

Ambient SVCs are found in other Vanuatu languages (Hyslop 2001: 304-312; Barbour 2012: 352-355; Healey 2013: 230; Moore 2019: 216). In Ahamb, ambient SVCs are most

commonly attested with the stative verb *vuy* 'be good' as in (11.16a-b). In (11.16c) the stative verb *drag* 'be difficult' appears as V2 in an ambient SVC. In such constructions, V2 always takes a third-person singular neutral subject index.

(11.16) a. *Nga-kajkaj*   ***nga-vuy***.
             3SG-be.tasty   3SG-be.good
             'It is very tasty.' [85-41]

         b. *Naur* *nga-mes*   ***nga-vuy***.
             place   3SG-be.dry   3SG-be.good
             'The earth is very dry.' [3-84]

         c. *Mata-gas*   ***nga-drag***.
             1PL.INCL-work   3SG-be.difficult
             'We work hard.' [236-55]

CHAPTER 12.   COMPLEMENTATION AND DIRECT/INDIRECT SPEECH

12.1   Introduction

In Ahamb, an inflected verb or a clause can function as the complement of a main verb. No examples have been attested of complements functioning as subjects of main clauses but it is common for objects to be expressed as clausal complements. There are two main types of complementation constructions in Ahamb: (1) the complement is only marked with a neutral subject index followed by the subsequential marker *r-*, and (2) the complement is introduced by a complementiser. The complementisers *kar, ur aven* and *gan* have been attested in Ahamb. This section describes the different types of complementation in Ahamb. The material is organised according to the form of complementation – without a complementiser (§12.2) and with a complementiser (§12.3). The two sections also discuss the semantic types of verbs that can function as main verbs in such constructions. Direct and indirect speech is discussed in §12.4.

12.2   Complementation without a complementiser (with (anti)desiderative, (in)ability and intention verbs)

Desiderative/antidesiderative, ability/inability and intention verbs can function as main verbs in complementation constructions where the complement is normally marked by the subsequential marker *r-*. In such constructions, the subject of the complement is normally the same as the subject of the main verb.

The clauses in (12.1) illustrate such constructions with the desiderative/antidesiderative verbs *palong* 'want' and *ngot* 'not want.'

(12.1)   a.   *Na-**palong**   **na-r**-han   narog   barme.*
             1SG-want   1SG-SBQT-eat   laplap   island.cabbage
             'I want to eat laplap with island cabbage.' [201-46]

         b.   *Mrë-**sba-palong**   **mara-r**-hurhur   likalim   s-maru.*
             1DU.EXCL-NEG-want   1DU.EXCL-SBQT-clean   house   POSS.GNR-1DU.EXCL
             'We don't want to clean our house.' [116-36]

         c.   *Ta-**ngot**   **ta-r**-mdras-i.*
             3PL-not.want   3PL-SBQT-spoil-OBJ
             'They don't want to spoil him.' [37-266]

d. *Na-**ngot*** *nren* *ngail* ***ata-r**-van* *blar.*
1SG-not.want man NSG 3PL-SBQT-walk everywhere
'I don't want people walking all about.' [235-3]

Examples with the ability/inability verbs *nov(l)kar* 'be able to' and *dras* 'not be able to' as main verbs are given in (12.2).

(12.2) a. *Mata-**novkar*** ***mata-r**-van* *vi* *lihayhay.*
1PL.EXCL-can 1PL.EXCL-SBQT-go go.to jungle
'We can go to the jungle.' [69-13]

b. *Në-**sba**-**novkar*** ***na-r**-tütüs.*
1SG-NEG-can 1SG-SBQT-write
'I cannot write.' [67-31]

c. *Na-**dras*** ***na-r**-paj.*
1SG-not.be.able.to 1SG-SBQT-sleep
'I can't sleep.' [36-78]

The verb *kar* 'intend'[126] and the nuclear SVC *kor rës* 'try' can express intention and similar functions, as in (12.3). The verb *kar* is more commonly used in the sense of 'say' and thus in direct/indirect speech constructions (see §12.4).

(12.3) a. *Ta-**kar*** ***ta-r**-gmay.*
3PL-say 3PL-SBQT-come
'They intend/decide to come.' [92-40]

b. *Mara-**kor*** *rës* ***mara-r**-varus* *ai.*
1DU.EXCL-do see 1DU.EXCL-SBQT-paddle there
'We try to paddle there.' [56-22]

In such constructions, the complement verb can appear with a neutral index without *r-*, although this is uncommon.

(12.4) *Na-**palong*** *na-paj* *rëvëh.*
1SG-want 1SG-sleep middle
'I want to sleep in the middle.' [24-53]

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[126] This is the secondary meaning of the verb *kar.* It primarily means 'say', as discussed elsewhere throughout this chapter.

When the complement is an intransitive verb, such constructions can be rephrased by replacing the complement with a nominalised version of the verb, usually with the nominalisation suffix *-in* (see §3.3.3.1). In the two examples in (12.5), the noun *pajin* 'sleeping' is a nominalisation of the verb *paj* 'sleep'.

(12.5) a. *Tete   iha   nga-**dras**   **pajin**.*
             child   PROX   3SG-not.be.able.to   sleeping
             'This child cannot sleep.' [116-71]

        b. *Ange   sba-**palong**   **pajin**.*
             3SG   NEG-want   sleeping
             'He does not want to sleep.' [116-65]

12.3   Complementation with a complementiser (with cognitive, sensory and desiderative verbs)

By far the most commonly used complementiser in Ahamb is *kar*, which is also employed in direct/indirect speech constructions (see §12.4). The complementisers *gan* and *ur aven* have also been attested although they are less commonly used.

Complementation constructions that involve a complementiser are characterised by the following: (1) the main verb is normally marked with an object pro-index; (2) the complement can be marked with the subsequential marker *r-* but this is not as common as in complementation constructions without a complementiser; (3) the subject of the main verb and the subject of the complement are commonly different. Verbs that can take complements introduced with a complementiser are cognitive, sensory and desiderative verbs.

12.3.1 The complementiser *kar*

A few examples with *kar* are listed first, ordered according to the semantic category of the main verb.

The desiderative verb *palong* 'want' is commonly attested with *kar*, as demonstrated in (12.6a-b). *Palong* is the only verb which can have a complement marked with or without a complementiser. Its negative counterpart, *ngot* 'not want' has not been attested in constructions where it takes a complement introduced by a complementiser. However, it is possible to negate *palong* to achieve an antidesiderative meaning, as in (12.6c). In (12.6d) there is no object pro-index on the main verb, which is not a common occurrence.

(12.6) a. *Ka-**palong-ni** kar*   *ka-han*   *nari*   *naur*   *a*   *ras.*
2SG-want-OBJ   COMP   2SG-eat   thing   place   LOC   sea
'You want to eat seafood.' [69-40]

b. *Mata-**palong-ni***   *kar*   *mata-r-sëlvar*   *husür*
1PL.EXCL-want-OBJ   COMP   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-talk   follow

vanin   *s-mato.*
trip   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL
'We want to talk about our trip.' [101-1]

c. *Në-**sba-palong-ni** kar*   *nren*   *drës*   *mi*   *nga-r-novkar-e.*
1SG-NEG-want-OBJ   COMP   man   INDF   again   3SG-SBQT-know-OBJ
'I don't want yet another person to find out about it.' [11-68]

d. *Ra-**palong** kar*   *ra-r-van.*
3DU-want   COMP   3DU-SBQT-go
'The two of them want to leave.' [55-155]

The cognitive verbs *nov* 'think' and *nov(l)kar* 'know' commonly appear with complements introduced by the complementiser *kar*:

(12.7) a. *Ra-**nov-ni***   *kar*   *nga-kaj*   *bbën*   *nahre*   *ki-li*   *nogay.*
3DU-think-OBJ   COMP   3SG-bite   kill   boy   DIM-DEM   already
'They thought that it already bit the boy to death.' [30-50]

b. *Ra-**nov-ni***   *kar*   *ra-r-va-jëbur*   *a*   *ras.*
3DU-think-OBJ   COMP   3DU-SBQT-GO-descend   LOC   sea
'They think that they are going down to the sea.' [9-18]

c. *Mata-**novkar-e***   *kar*   *nga-r-manug.*
1PL.EXCL-know-obj   COMP   3SG-SBQT-be.ready
'We know that it is ready.' [73-45]

d. *Na-**novkar-e** kar*   *na-mas-sar*   *naih*   *drës.*
1SG-know-OBJ   COMP   1SG-NEC-spear   fish   INDF
'I know that I need to spear a fish.' [37.1-103]

The sensory verbs *rës* 'see' and *palong* 'feel, hear, like'[127] also appear in complementation constructions with *kar*:

(12.8) a. *Drata-ro-yovyov   ro-**rs-i**   kar   naih   ata-gmay.*
            1PL.INCL-IPFV-dive IPFV-see-OBJ COMP   fish   3PL-come
            'We are diving and we see that the fish are coming.' [61-16]

    b. *Na-**palong**-ni   lön   be-n   hanaw*
        1SG-feel-OBJ   LOCP   body-CNSTR   1SG

        ***kar**   na-maur   roh.*
        COMP   1SG-be.alive   be.located
        'I feel it in my body that I am still alive.' [36-73]

    c. *Na-**palong**-ni   **kar**   Maryan   nga-ro-fraenem   naih.*
        1SG-hear-OBJ   COMP   M.   3SG-IPFV-fry   fish
        'I hear that Maryan is frying fish.' [235-11]

    d. *Na-**palong**-ni   **kar**   nren   ngail   ta-r-van   vi   lön*
        1SG-like-OBJ   COMP   man   NSG   3PL-SBQT-go   go.to   LOCP

        nalikalim   skul   lön   sande   parne.
        house   school   LOCP   Sunday   QNT
        'I like it that people go to church every Sunday.' [235-19]

A complement can be negated when it is introduced by a complementiser as in (12.9).

(12.9) *Ata-**rs-i**   kar   **mëjba**-nav   hën   mata-r-prag-ni.*
         3PL-see-OBJ   that   1PL.EXCL.NEG-be.enough   in.order.to   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-do-OBJ
         'They saw that there are not enough of us to pull it off.' [57-10]

Similarly, the complement in marked complementation constructions can be coded with the future marker *bar-*:

(12.10) *Ka-**palong**-ni   **kar**   kë-**bar**-ro-ruru.*
          2SG-want-OBJ   COMP   2SG-FUT-IPFV-return
          'You want to be going back [home].' [18.1-32]

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[127] The sensory verb *palong* has a number of meanings and in these examples it is glossed with its relevant meaning. *Palong* can also mean 'smell'. Although this meaning also has a sensory function, speakers prefer to rephrase constructions with *palong* meaning 'smell' by adding the noun *nabon* 'smell' as its object, as in (i):
 (i) *Na-palong   nabon   naih   aven   ata-fraenem-ni.*
      1SG-smell   smell   fish   REL   3PL-fry-OBJ
      'I can smell that they are frying fish.' [235-9]

12.3.2 The complementiser *gan*

The lexeme *gan*, which means '(be) like this, this way, thus' normally functions as a verb, adverb or a filler. With the sensory verbs *palong* 'feel, hear' and *rës* 'see' it has also been attested to function as a complementiser:

(12.11) a. *Mata-**palong-ni**   **gan**   nga-vi   löhmar   vis-en   mato.*
        1PL.EXCL-feel-OBJ   COMP   3SG-COP   easy   to-CNSTR   1PL.EXCL
        'We feel like we are having an easy time.' [69-11]

    b. *Na-**palong-ni**   **gan**   a   Sema   nga-lo   nog.*
        1SG-hear-OBJ   COMP   PERS   S.   3SG-wake.up   already
        'I can hear that Sema is already awake.' [235-12]

    c. *Mata-**rs-i**   **gan**   nanünün   s-en   nga-gamuj   mato.*
        1PL.EXCL-see-OBJ   COMP   spirit   POSS.GNR-3SG   3SG-lead   1PL.EXCL
        'We see that his spirit is leading us.' [235-21]

12.3.3 The complementiser *ur aven*

The complementiser *ur aven* can introduce a complement of the verb *rës* 'see' without it being marked with an object pro-index. This complementiser is not commonly used. An example is given in (12.12). *Ur aven* can also function as a subordinator introducing reason/purpose clauses (see §13.2.2.3).

(12.12) *Nga-rës   **ur aven**   nari   ili   nga-gmay.*
        3SG-see   COMP   thing   ANA   3SG-come
        'He sees that this thing is coming.' [45-22]

12.4   Direct and indirect speech

Both direct and indirect speech constructions in Ahamb normally involve an utterance verb in the main clause such as *kar* 'say', *pus* 'ask', *kaur* 'announce' or *kaykay* 'call' with a complement introduced by the complementiser *kar*. Alternatively, direct speech can be introduced by an inflected form of the transitive verb *kar* 'say', often resulting in two inflected verbs (sometimes both are instances of *kar*) in the main clause.

It is very likely that the complementiser *kar* evolved from the verb *kar*, possibly first as an utterance complementiser for direct and indirect speech, and later as the general

complementiser described in §12.3.1. It is typologically common for utterance verbs to evolve into quotative particles (Payne 2006: 296).

Depending on the verb in the main clause of direct/indirect speech constructions, two types of coding have been attested. The verbs *kar* 'say' and *kaur* 'announce' always appear with an object pro-index, while *pus* 'ask' and *kaykay* 'call' do not take such marking. This is demonstrated by the direct speech examples in (12.13).

(12.13) a. *A   nana   s-en   nga-kar-e   vis-en   kar,*
    PERS   mother   POSS.GNR-3SG   3SG-say-OBJ   to-3SG   COMP

    "Nbe-n   s-maru   nga-mhav."
    body-CNSTR   POSS.GNR-1PL.EXCL   3SG-be.tired
    'Her mother told her, "We are tired.' [116-35]

  b. *...ke-r-kaur-i   kar,   "Na-van   nga-ganha*
    2SG.SEC-SBQT-announce-OBJ   COMP   1SG-walk   3SG-be.like.this

    lön   nran   iha."
    LOCP   ground   PROX
    '…you announce, "This is how I walk this earth."' [57-268]

  c. *A   giant nga-pus hën-i   kar,*
    PERS   giant 3SG-ask GNRP-OBJ   COMP

    "Ey,   hayug   ki-van   a   bi   ha?"
    ITJ   2SG   2SG.IRR-go   LOC   where   EMP
    'The giant asked her, "Hey, where are you coming from?' [47-33]

  d. *Ra-kaykay   mato   kar,   "Jumrah!"*
    3DU-call   1PL.EXCL   COMP   get.up
    'They called over to us, "Get up!"' [18.2-32]

The examples in (12.14) demonstrate direct speech introduced by *kar* as an inflected verb without an object pro-index. In (12.14a), the verb *kar* appears twice in the main clause – first as a purely lexical verb, meaning 'say', which is marked with an object pro-index, as described above. Then it occurs directly preceding the complement clause.

(12.14) a. *Ata-kar-e   vis-en   Taso ata-kar,   "Ki-novkar-e   rben sveri*
    3DU-say-OBJ   to-CNSTR   T.   3DU-say   2SG.IRR-know-OBJ   why

    a   nana   s-am   nga-van   dran   hayug?"
    PERS   mother POSS.GNR-2SG   3SG-go   away.from   2SG
    'They said to Taso, "Do you know why your mother left you?"' [44-110]

b. *Nga-gmay   kaykay   hanaw   **nga-kar**,   "Jif   ka-gmay   aha!"*
3SG-come   call   1SG   3SG-say   chief   2SG-come   here
'He came and called me, "Chief, come here!"' [92-58]

c. *Na-pus   hën   a   vavu   in   **na-kar**,   "Vavu   nseri?"*
1SG-ask   GNRP   PERS   grandfather   DIST   1SG-say   grandfather   what
'I asked the grandfather, "Grandfather, what [is it]?"' [70-25]

Alternatively, direct speech can be introduced by an inflected form of *kar* 'say' without a complementiser.

(12.15) a. *Mata-**kar**,   "Ooo   nga-manug   nogay*
1PL.EXCL-say   ITJ   3SG-be.ready   now

drata-va-tlas-i."
1PL.INCL-GO-take.out.from.stone.oven-OBJ
'We said, "Oh, it is ready now, let's take it out of the stone oven."' [73-46]

b. *Na-**kar**,   "Ooo   dre   a?"*
1SG-say   ITJ   blood   Q
'I said, "Oh, blood?"' [57-136]

The complements in the examples above are unambiguously instances of direct speech. For Ahamb, three criteria for detecting direct speech can be defined: (1) the use of the inflected verb *kar* 'say' to introduce the complement; (2) the person/number marking of the arguments in the main clause and the complement align in a way that suggests direct speech; (3) the use of interjections or vocatives in the complement. Specific dramatic intonation may also suggest direct speech.

Indirect speech is unambiguously marked when the person/number marking in the main clause and the complement align in a way that rules out direct speech. This is demonstrated in the clauses in (12.16), where the complement includes a verb marked with a subject index whose person/number marking's (dis)alignment with the arguments of the main clause verb clearly identifies direct or indirect speech. In example (12.16a), the first-person subject index in the complement refers to the speakers suggesting indirect speech. On the other hand, in example (12.16b) the use of the second person (and singular) subject index in the complement removes the complement's proposition from the circumstantial frame of the main clause, indicating a direct speech construction.

(12.16) a. *Naujin sa Atua nga-kar-e kar be*
speech CLF.GNR God 3SG-say-OBJ COMP NEGMOD

driti-vnah nari sa nren mnaj.
1PL.INCL.IRR-steal thing CLF.GNR man different
'God's teaching says that we must not steal from others.' [66-5]

b. *Kapten s-drato ne ngar-kar nari*
captain POSS.GNR-1PL.INCL LIM 3SG-say thing

drata-r-husür-i kar, "Be gu-mün!"
1PL.INCL-SBQT-follow-OBJ COMP NEGMOD 2SG.IRR-drink
'Our captain gave us an order that we followed, "You must not drink!"' [60-155]

Another example of unambiguous indirect speech is the complement in (12.17a), where the first person marking in the complement refers to the speakers. The sentence in (12.17b) contains a complement with a prohibitive construction, as in (12.17a), but here the use of the second person subject index in the complement that refers to the recipient in the main clause, means that the sentence is ambiguous and could be interpreted both as direct and indirect speech.

(12.17) a. *Rben sveri nga-ro-tas*[128] ***draru*** *kar*
why 3SG-IPFV-forbid 1DU.INCL COMP

*be **dra**-ro-nunburbur jab?*
PROH1 1DU.INCL-IPFV-be.quiet PROH2
'Why is he forbidding us to be quiet?' [9-98]

b. *Nakenarënin s-ag, na-kar-e vis-en **hayug** kar,*
child POSS.GNR-1SG 1SG-say-OBJ to-CNSTR 2SG COMP

*"Be **ka**-r-van vi ras jab!"*
PROH1 2SG-SBQT-go go.to sea PROH2
'My child, I told you, "Do not go to the sea!"' or
'My child, I told you not to go to the sea." [68-55]

The sentence in example (12.18) can in principle be an instance of either direct or indirect speech, but the circumstances suggest that the indirect speech analysis is more likely. The verb *kar* is used with the meaning 'call (by name)', rather than 'say'.

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[128] Also interesting here is the use of the verb *tas* 'ban, block, forbid', which has a locutionary element, in the main clause, instead of the usual utterance verbs described above.

(12.18) *Navüj   iha   ta-**kar**-e   **kar**   ata-r-vi   vietnam.*
Banana PROX 3PL-say-OBJ COMP 3PL-SBQT-COP *vietnam*
'These bananas, they are called *vietnam*.' [85-95]
(Lit. '[People] say that [the bananas] are *vietnam*.')

In the sentence in (12.19) the subject of the complement is fronted to before the main verb. This breaking up of a presumed direct speech quote suggests that this is an instance of indirect speech.

(12.19) ***Nrang tamës*** *aven   ata-kar   nga-ro-gmay.*
cyclone   INDF.ART 3PL-say 3SG-IPFV-come
'A cyclone, they say, is coming.' [103-23]

The two examples in (12.20) are ambiguous and could be interpreted as both direct or indirect speech.

(12.20) a. *Ta-pus   hën   ato   kar   nsveri   nga-sabb?*
3PL-ask GNRP 3PL COMP what 3SG-be.bad
'They asked them what was wrong.' or
'They asked them, "What is wrong?"' [76-54]

b. *Na-r-kaur-i   kar   lön   Atua   ne   drata-maur.*
1SG-SBQT-announce-OBJ COMP GNRP God LIM 1PL.INCL-be.alive
'I announce that we are only alive in God.' or
'I announce, "We are only alive in God."' [38-25]

12.5   Summary of complementation and direct/indirect speech strategies

A summary of the form and function of complementation and direct/indirect speech constructions in Ahamb is presented in Table 12-1.

Table 12-1. Summary of complementation and direct/indirect speech strategies

complementiser	main verbs (V1)	form
no complementiser	(anti)desiderative, ability and intention verbs, e.g. *palong* 'want' *ngot* 'not want' *nov(l)kar* 'can' *dras* 'not be able to' *kar* 'intend' *kor rës* 'try'	V1 + Neutral_SI-*r*-V2 (strong preference for *r*- on V2)
with complementiser	(anti)desiderative, cognition, sensation verbs, e.g.: *palong* 'want, feel, hear, like' *nov(l)kar* 'know' *nov* 'think' *rës* 'see'	V1-OBJ + COMP + complement (strong preference for object pro-index on V1) COMP = *kar, gan, ur aven*
direct/indirect speech (complementiser *kar* or inflected form of verb *kar* 'say')	utterance verbs *kar* 'say' *kaur* 'announce'	V1-OBJ + COMP/Neutral_SI-*kar* + complement
	utterance verbs *pus* 'ask' *kaykay* 'call' *tas* 'forbid'	V1 + COMP/Neutral_SI-*kar* + complement

CHAPTER 13.   COMPLEX CLAUSES

13.1   Introduction

The types of clauses discussed in this chapter have looser juncture between their verbs compared to SVCs and complementation constructions. Three types of constructions are described in this chapter: subordination, *sequential event constructions*, and coordination.

Subordination is described in §13.2. In Ahamb, there are a number of subordinators that code adverbial subordinate clauses for time, reason/purpose, condition-consequence and location. Some examples of zero marked subordination are also given. The verbs in a subordinate clause do not carry any specific marking that is different from verbs in main clauses.

Sequential event constructions (SECs) are the topic of §13.3. A SEC is a type of clause chaining construction in which a sequence of events, which can normally be considered to constitute parts of a larger event package, is encoded in a special way. In a SEC, all verbs share the same subject. The first verb is marked with a subject index as normal (usually a neutral subject index), while each consecutive verb is marked with a sequential event subject index (see §8.2.2). SECs are different from chaining structures described in other languages, such as switch-reference and echo-reference constructions. The clauses in a SEC hang together both by means of semantics (the events are sequential and related) and grammatical coding. The clauses in a SEC are not embedded as subordinate clauses and therefore the juncture between them is considered looser than in subordination, but tighter than in coordination, where no coding on the verbs holds the clauses together.

Coordination constructions are described in §13.4. Ahamb codes adversative, disjunctive and augmentative coordination through special coordinators. Conjunctive coordination is usually asyndetic.

13.2   Adverbial subordination

There are a number of subordinating conjunctions in Ahamb that introduce adverbial clauses. This section lists these subordinators and gives examples of adverbial clauses for time, reason/purpose, condition-consequence and location.

There is a relatively large number of subordinators in Ahamb. Most notably, the word *(na)ur*, which has a plethora of different meanings, can function as a subordinator with different

meanings. Additionally, *(na)ur* and the relativiser *aven*, can co-occur with other subordinators and with each other (always *aven* following *(na)ur*), to create compound variants of subordinators. For example, the reason/purpose subordinator *hën* also has the variants *hën naur* and *hën naur aven*. The borrowed subordinator *taem* 'when' also has the variants *taem ur, taem naur, taem ur aven, taem naur aven.* The phrase *naur aven* is also commonly used as a filler in Ahamb.

Since adverbial clauses can be substituted with a noun phrase, in Ahamb some subordinators also function as prepositions with similar meaning. Prepositions are described in §9.2.5 and in this chapter reference is made to descriptions and examples of prepositions, where appropriate.

13.2.1 Time clauses

The common nouns *(na)bong* 'time, day', *(na)ur* 'time' and the Bislama borrowing *taem* 'time' can be used as subordinators meaning 'when'. These subordinators are commonly used and have complex variants. The borrowing *sem taem* 'at the same time as' is also used as a subordinator, although less commonly. *Tarven* acts as a subordinator meaning 'while, until' and *varah* as 'after'. The clauses introduced by these subordinators normally precede main clauses.

13.2.1.1 The subordinator (na)bong

The common noun *(na)bong* 'day, time' can be used as a subordinator, most commonly in the compound forms *nabong naur aven* and *nabong (na)ur*. On its own, it has only been attested as a subordinator without article accretion.

(13.1) a. ***Nabong naur aven***   *mata-r-ibb*   *narog*   *vi*   *lön*   *nrokay*
When   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-spread   laplap   go.to LOCP   leaf

nga-r-hav,   *mata-r-ppusppus*   *vi*   *lön.*
3SG-SBQT-finish   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-squeeze.coconut.milk   go.to   LOCP
'When we are done spreading the laplap on the leaf, we squeeze coconut milk onto it.'
[73-34]

b. ***Nabong ur*** *nga-jëbur* *a* *ras,*
   When   3SG-descend   LOC   sea

    nga-puspus   *nakepnenin*   *s-en.*
    3SG-enquire   woman   POSS.GNR-3SG
    'When he came down to the coast, he enquired about his wife.' [46-55]

c. ***Nabong naur*** *ara-jaglön* *angay,*
   When   3DU-find   3SG

    nga-ro-sar   *twan*   *naven*   *nabrav*   *ur*   *nga-jkenene.*
    3SG-IPFV-carry   heap.up   fruit   breadfruit   place   3SG-be.one
    'When they found him, he was heaping up the breadfruit in one place.' [252-24]

d. ***Bong*** *ara-palong* *ara-r-van,*   *ra-kodr*   *par*   *windo*   *ngail.*
   When   3DU-want   3DU-SBQT-go   3DU-close   QNT   window   NSG
    'When they were ready to go, they closed all windows.' [30-16]

13.2.1.2 *The subordinator* (na)ur

The lexeme *(na)ur*, which has many different forms and functions, including denoting temporal and locational settings, can also be used as a temporal subordinator. It has been attested in the forms *ur, naur* and *naur aven*, which are all equally common. Since this subordinator can appear with or without the initial *na-* (accreted article)*,* this subordinator is likely the product of grammaticalisation of the common noun *(na)ur* 'place, time'.

(13.2) a. *Nahre*   *ngail,*   ***ur***   *ta-s*   *npep*   *gan,*
          child   NSG   when   3PL-see   book   be.like

          oo   *novin*   *s-ato*   *kemkem*   *habat.*
          ITJ   thought   POSS.GNR-3PL   be.happy   much
          'The children, when they saw the books, oh they were so very happy.' [55-152]

b. ***Naur***   *ta-r-ken*   *napenvër*   *gmay,*   *in,*   *seremoni*   *nga-jëb.*
   When   3PL-SBQT-take   woman   come   DEM.PRN   ceremony   3SG-end
    'When they bring the bride here, this is it, the ceremony ends.' [72-82]

c. ***Naur aven*** *a*   *tija*   *nga-kar-e*   *kar*   *ra-roh*   *skul,*
   When   PERS   teacher   3SG-say-OBJ   COMP   3DU-stay   school

    aru   *ra-ngot.*
    3DU   3DU-not.want
    'When the teacher said they should stay home from school, they didn't want to.' [55-154]

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13.2.1.3 *The subordinator* **taem**

The borrowed lexeme *taem* 'time' can also function as a subordinator and has the complex variants: *taem ur, taem naur, taem ur aven, taem naur aven*. Examples (13.3a-e) demonstrate the use of the different variants. The complex variants can be considered grammaticalised relativisation constructions with or without the overt relativiser *aven* (see §4.6), with the meaning 'at the time that…'. Example (13.3f) demonstrates the sequence *taem naur*, where *naur* 'time, place' functions as the subject in the subordinate clause (see §9.2.1.2 for a discussion of *naur* as the subject of clauses related to the weather and times of the day) and cannot be treated as part of the subordinator.

(13.3) a. ***Taem***   *mata-kër,*   *ato*   *parne*   *ta-hër-i.*
    When   1PL.EXCL-dig   3PL   QNT   3PL-dig-OBJ
    'When we harvest yams, everyone digs them.' [58-77]
    (Lit. 'When we dig [= harvest the yams], they all dig them [the yams out].')

  b. ***Taem ur***   *mata-r-prag*   *par*   *ni,*   *nhaw*   *nga-r-ganha.*
    When   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-work   already   OBJ   rope   3SG-SBQT-be.like.this
    'When we are finished making it, the rope will look like this.' [64-139]

  c. *Hana-rs-i*   *lön*   *namr-en*   *hanaw,*
    1SG-see-OBJ   LOCP   eye-CNSTR   1SG

    taem naur   *na-rohroh*   *Saotwes Be.*
    when   1SG-be.located   SB
    'I saw it with my own eyes, when I was in Southwest Bay.' [90-10]

  d. ***Taem ur aven***   *nabong*   *nga-rëm,*
    When   day   3SG-be.five

    nbe-n   *nga-ro-këkbaj*   *ngail.*
    body.part-3SG   3SG-IPFV-swell   NSG
    'By the fifth day (lit. when the days are five), his body is swelling up.' [84-10]

  e. ***Taem naur aven***   *naih*   *ngail*   *ta-gmay,*   ***taem***   *ta-makuvkuv*   *gmay,*
    When   fish   NSG   3PL-come   when   3PL-be.out   come

    drata-ro-jav   *ato.*
    1PL.INCL-IPFV-spear   3PL
    'When the fish come, when they are out, we spear them.' [63-136]

  f. ***Taem***   ***naur***   *nga-ro-vi*   *tuhrav*   *gmay,*
    When   place   3SG-IPFV-become   afternoon   come

    nam   *nga-lugus*
    mosquito   3SG-be.many
    'When [late] afternoon comes, there are many mosquitoes.' [69-55]

13.2.1.4 Tarven *'until'*

Tarven is a subordinator meaning 'until'. It can also function as a preposition (see §9.2.5.1).

(13.4) a. *Na-tëgaw*   ***tarven*** *na-gmay*   *ne-r-vi*   *napnevër.*
            1SG-hold   **until**   1SG-come   1SG.SEC-SBQT-become woman
            'I kept it until I became an [adult] woman.' [77-8]

      b. *Mata-mas-roh*   *vane*   ***tarven*** *nhabaji*   *in*   *nga-hav.*
            1PL.EXCL-NEC-stay go.LIM   **until**   month   DIST   3SG-finish
            'We must stay until the month ends.' [18-38]

13.2.1.5 Varah *'before'*

The word *varah* can be used as a subordinator to introduce a temporal clause referring to an event that precedes the event described in the main clause.

(13.5) ***Varah*** *mata-r-ve*   *naben,*   *mata-r-saw*   *nvayv.*
        Before   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-weave   mat   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-cut   pandanus
        'Before we weave a mat, we cut pandanus.' [7-10]

The word *varah* is not commonly used as a subordinator. More often, it appears as an adverb meaning 'later' or a verb meaning 'follow'. The temporal local noun *gamuj* 'past' cannot be used as a subordinator.

13.2.2 Reason/purpose clauses

There are a few subordinators to mark reason/purpose clauses in Ahamb. The two most common ones are *hën* 'in order to, so that' and *rben* 'because'. Less commonly, the subordinators *ur, ibatëh* and *batëh naur aven* can be used in this function. Such subordinate clauses normally follow main clauses.

13.2.2.1 Hën *'in order to, so that'*

The subordinator *hën* introduces a subordinate clause relating to purpose with the meaning 'in order to'. In this function *hën* is obligatorily followed by a verb with a neutral subject index and the subsequential marker *r-*.

(13.6) a. *Dra-r-van*   *dre-drëngdrëng*   *naih* *ngel drës*
            1DU.INCL-SBQT-go   1DU.INCL.SEC-look.for   fish   NSG-INDF

        hën   *drata-r-han-i.*
        in.order.to   1DU.INCL-SBQT-eat-OBJ
        'We will go look for some fish for us to eat.' [65-9]

        b. *Nga-husür*   *naser* ***hën***   *nga-r-vi*   *a*   *mhar* *lön*
            3SG-follow   road   in.order.to   3SG-SBQT-go.to   LOC   up   LOCP

        naur   *a*   *im*   *s-ato.*
        place   LOC   village   POSS.GNR-3PL
        'He follows the road in order to go up to their village.' [68-36]

Hën is also used commonly after the verb *van* 'go' to introduce the result of an ongoing process as in (13.7). In this function, *r-* is not obligatory, as in the purpose clauses in (13.6).

(13.7) a. *Nasëlvarin* *ili*   *nga-van* ***hën***   *nga*-*soh*   *nasëbon.*
            story   ANA   3SG-go   in.order.to   3SG-reach   end
            'The story is now approaching its end.' [30-182]

        b. *Namiar* *nga-ro-van*   ***hën***   *nga-r*-*majur.*
            sun   3SG-IPFV-go   in.order.to   3SG-SBQT-go.down
            'The sun is going to set soon.' [3-29]

Hën also has variants with *naur* and *naur aven* as in (13.8). There is no apparent difference in function between the different variants of the subordinator.

(13.8) a. *Ta-rëng* *nanovin* *s-ato*   ***hën naur***
            3PL-put   thought   POSS.GNR-3PL   in.order.to

        ta-r-kur-e   *nga-r-maj.*
        3PL-SBQT-make-OBJ   3SG-SBQT-die.
        'They made a plan to kill him.' [30-160]

        b. *Nakermenin* *ngail* *ta-ro-masüsül*   *mine* ***hën naur aven***
            father   NSG   3PL-IPFV-prepare   too   in.order.to

        ta-r-pan   *narënhaj.*
        3PL-SBQT-cook   rice
        'The men are preparing to cook rice.' [72-46]

A subordinate clause introduced by *hën* can be reframed as a noun phrase in which case *hën* acts as a preposition (see §9.2.5.2). As a preposition, *hën* can introduce an oblique expression

denoting reason or purpose (among other functions), while as a subordinator it has only been attested to encode purpose.

13.2.2.2   Rben *'because'*

Rben is used to encode reason as in (13.9). It can also function as a preposition meaning 'because of', and it is used in semantically identical constructions where the subordinate clause's meaning is expressed by an NP (see §9.2.5.1).

(13.9)   *Namrarür   s-en   nga-tür   **rben**   nasver   nga-pent-ni*
          Tear   POSS.GNR-3S   3SG-drop   because   parrot   3SG-paint-OBJ

        lön   kala   aven   nga-mermer.
        LOCP   colour   REL   3SG-be.black
        'His tears were falling because the parrot painted him black.' [106-67]

Rben as a subordinator also appears in its variants *rben naur* and *rben naur aven*:

(13.10)   a.   *Ata-kemkem   **rben naur**   nga-van   va-ro-jar   ih.*
             3PL-be.happy   because   3SG-go   GO-IPFV-spear   fish
             'They are happy because he is going to spear fish.' [37.1-325]

     b.   *Sori   hana   be   ni-gmay   bangim   **rben naur aven**   hanaw*
            Sorry   1SG   NEGMOD   1SG.IRR-come   door   because   1SG

            na-ro-kor   a   tete   s-ag   nga-ro-süs.
            1SG-IPFV-make   PERS   child   POSS.GNR-1SG   3SG-IPFV-suckle
            'Sorry I cannot come to the door because I am breastfeeding my child.' [47-39]

13.2.2.3   Ur (aven) *'in order to, because'*

Ur and its variant *ur aven* are rarely used as subordinators in reason/purpose clauses. They can express reason or purpose. The corresponding preposition *ur*, is discussed in §9.2.5.1.

(13.11)   a.   *Mata-r-gmay   rov   hayug   lön   naur   prahor   iha*
             1PL.EXCL-SBQT-come   be.close   2SG   LOCP   place   morning   PROX

            *nogha   **ur**   ka-r-kas   mato   mata-r-parpar.*
            now   in.order.to   2SG-SBQT-wash   1PL.EXCL   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-be.clean
            'We come to you this morning because you are going to clear our sins (lit. to wash us clean.)' [28-24]

b. *Hana*   *sba-jiji*   *maru* *bong* *drës*   **ur aven**
   1SG   NEG-shell.out   copra   day   INDF   because

   mata-vi   *hre*   *ne.*
   1PL.EXCL-COP   boy   LIM
   'I had never shelled out copra [before], because we were just young boys [at the time].' [6-72]

13.2.2.4   Ibatëh, batëh naur aven *'because'*

Rarely, the subordinator *ibatëh* and the related compound *batëh naur aven* are attested as encoding a reason clause.

(13.12) a. *Seremoni*   *iha*   *be*   *i-van*   **ibatëh**   *a*   *tata*   *sa*
            ceremony   PROX   NEGMOD   3SG.IRR-go   because   PERS   father   CLF.GNR

            nahre   *iha*   *sba-rohroh*   *drwan*   *drato.*
            boy   PROX   NEG-be.located   with   1PL.INCL
            'The ceremony cannot proceed because this child's father is not present.' [234-50]

         b. *Pragin*   *hën*   *dram*   *nga-jhay*   **batëh naur aven**
            work   GNRP   yam   3SG-not.exist   because

            nren   *jba-lum*   *dram*   *mi.*
            man   3PL.NEG-plant   yam   again
            'The yam-related traditions no longer exist because people no longer plant yams.' [58-71]

         c. *Ta-kankan*   **batëh naur aven**   *nga-van*   *sba-gmay*   *jarpoh*   *mi.*
            3PL-eat   because   3SG-go   NEG-come   appear   again
            'They eat [ceremonial food commemorating someone's death] because he left and never returned [and is presumed dead].' [12-24]

13.2.3 Condition-consequence clauses

Thompson, Longacre & Hwang (2007: 255) classify conditional clauses as reality conditionals, referring to real present, habitual/generic or past situations, and unreality conditionals, further divided into predictive and imaginative situations. In Ahamb, the subordinator *ke* introduces reality conditionals and the subordinator *(na)ur* introduces unreality conditionals. The future marker *bar-* commonly appears in conditional clauses.

The conditional clause generally precedes the main consequence clause. A pause is common between the conditional clause and the main clause, signalled by a comma in the examples below. Intonation tends to be gradually falling on the main clause. The following subsections

discuss the different types of conditionals in Ahamb, ordered by the subordinator used. Conditionals unmarked by a subordinator are discussed in the last subsection.

13.2.3.1   Ke *'if'*

Ke 'if' and its compound variant *ke ur* are used to introduce conditional clauses referring to 'real' present situations, as in (13.13a), or habitual/generic situations, as in (13.13b-c).

(13.13) a. ***Ke*** *hayug*   *ka-visen*   *nasëlvarin*   *drës*   *aven*   *nga-gan,*   *ka-sër-i.*
          If   2SG   2SG-have   story   INDF   REL   3SG-be.like 2SG-tell-OBJ
          'If you have a story like this, [please] tell it.' [97-51]

          b. ***Ke ur*** *mata-palong*   *nga-r-mutmut*   *ne,*
          If   1PL.EXCL-want   3SG-SBQT-be.short   LIM

          mata-jav   *kuj*   *nasëbon.*
          1PL.EXCL-cut break   end
          'If we want it to be short, we cut its end.' [7-32]

          c. ***Ke ur*** *ka-r-mün*   *kava,*   *ka-r-dronk,*
          If   2SG-SBQT-drink   kava   2SG-SBQT-be.drunk

          ka-ngot   *vanvanin.*
          2SG-not.want   walking
          'If you drink kava, you will be drunk, you will not want to walk.' [107-93]

13.2.3.2   (Na)ur *'if'*

The conditional subordinator *(na)ur* can appear in the following forms: *ur, naur* and *naur aven.* The examples in (13.14) demonstrate conditional clauses with the different variants. The subordinator *(na)ur* is most likely a grammaticalisation of the common noun *naur* 'place, time', which can also introduce time subordinate clauses (see §13.2.1.2). The marking of conditionals and time clauses overlaps in many languages, including other Austronesian languages; typologically such neutralisation in marking only holds for predictive conditionals and future time clauses (Thompson, Longacre & Hwang 2007: 257). Examples (13.14a,c,e) demonstrate predictive conditionals in Ahamb. The verbs in all these examples are marked with the subsequential marker *r-* (see §8.2.1.1). Imaginative conditionals in Ahamb are most commonly hypothetical and involve a negative modality construction, featuring the particle *be/bi* and irrealis subject indexes (see §8.2.3.2), as in examples (13.14b,d,f-g). The sentence in (13.14h) includes a counterfactual conditional, where past tense is inferred from the context and imaginative unreality is marked by the future prefix *-bar.*

(13.14)　a.　***Ur***　*ka-r-ji*　　　　　*nga-r-leb,*
　　　　　　　If　2SG-SBQT-shell.out　3SG-SBQT-be.big

　　　　　　　nvar　*s-am*　　　　*mine*　*nga-r-leb.*
　　　　　　　money　POSS.GNR-2SG　too　3SG-SBQT-be.big
　　　　　　　'If you shell out a lot, your money will be a lot too.' [4-17]

　　　　b.　***Ur***　*bi*　　　　*miti-ji*　　　　　　*maru,*
　　　　　　　If　NEGMOD　1PL.EXCL.IRR-shell.out　copra

　　　　　　　bi　　　*miti-visen*　　　　*mani.*
　　　　　　　NEGMOD　1PL.EXCL.IRR-have　money
　　　　　　　'If you can't shell out copra, you can't have money.' [4-25]

　　　　c.　***Naur***　*nga-r-gmay*　　*hën*　　　*nga-r-haj*　　*ahnaw,*
　　　　　　　If　　　3SG-SBQT-come　in order to　3SG-SBQT-bite　1SG

　　　　　　　na-r-va-jar　　　　*vi*　　*lön*　　*nabur*　*wog.*
　　　　　　　1SG-SBQT-GO-roll　go.to　LOCP　hole　canoe
　　　　　　　'If it comes to bite me, I will roll into the canoe's hole.' [36-38]

　　　　d.　***Naur***　*be*　　　　*ti-kayrmar*　　*gur-e,*　　*be*　　　　*ti-kuk-ni.*
　　　　　　　If　　NEGMOD　3PL.IRR-pray　over-OBJ　NEGMOD　3PL.IRR-cook-OBJ
　　　　　　　'If they don't pray over it, they may not cook it.' [58-43]

　　　　e.　***Naur aven***　*ka-r-pan-i*　　　　*lön*　　*kro,*
　　　　　　　If　　　　　　2SG-SBQT-cook-OBJ　LOCP　pot

　　　　　　　ooo　*nga-kajkaj*　　*nga-vuy.*
　　　　　　　ITJ　3SG-be.sweet　3SG-be.good
　　　　　　　'If you cook it in a pot (=boil it), oh it is very tasty.' [85-40]

　　　　f.　***Naur aven***　*bi*　　　　*miti-pojpoj*　　　　*i-vuy,*
　　　　　　　If　　　　　　NEGMOD　1PL.EXCL.IRR-applaud　3SG.IRR-be.good

　　　　　　　bi　　　*miti-han*　　　　*nabbwas.*
　　　　　　　NEGMOD　1PL.EXCL.IRR-eat　pig
　　　　　　　'If you don't applaud well, you may not eat pig.' [71-138]

　　　　g.　*Naur* ***be***　***ku****-han-i,*　　　*hana*　*mine*　***be***　　　***ni****-han-i.*
　　　　　　　if　NEGMOD　2SG.IRR-eat-OBJ　1SG　too　NEGMOD　1SG.IRR-eat-it
　　　　　　　'If you don't (want to) eat it, I too cannot eat it.' [31-92]

　　　　h.　*Mata-nov-ni*　　　　*kar*　***naur aven***　*nrang*　***bar****-tams*　*mato,*
　　　　　　　1PL.EXCL-think-OBJ　COMP　if　　　　　wind　FUT-hit　1PL.EXCL

　　　　　　　*mëtë-****bar****-majmaj.*
　　　　　　　1PL.EXCL-FUT-die
　　　　　　　'We thought that if the cyclone hit us, we would die.' [14-74]

13.2.3.3   *Unmarked conditional clauses*

Condition-consequence constructions can also be formed without the use of subordinators. One such strategy of expressing imaginative conditionals is by using the future prefix *bar-* in both the conditional clause and the main clause. Such conditionals are normally counterfactual. The sentence in (13.15a) was uttered in a story after the storyteller stated that the subject (a young boy) was too young to bail out fast enough. In (13.15b) past time can be inferred from the context which renders the conditional counterfactual.

(13.15) a. ***Bar**-yesyes,*   *nadrung*   ***bar**-drödr,*   *be*   *mërë-**bar**-madrödr.*
           FUT-bail.out   water   FUT-be.dry   NEGMOD   1DU.EXCL-FUT-sink
           'If he [could] bail out [fast], there would be no more water [in the canoe] and we wouldn't sink.' [56-117]

      b. *Mrë-**bar**-rohroh*   *bay,*   *mrë-**bar**-novkar*   *naser*   *sa-mru*   *ne.*
           2DU-FUT-stay   EMP   2DU-FUT-know   road   POSS.GNR-2DU   LIM
           'If you had stayed a bit longer, you would have seen what would have happened to you.' [116-94]

The reality conditionals in (13.16-13.17) are marked purely by intonation. In the habitual/generic conditional in (13.16), intonation is stable, possibly slightly rising in the conditional clause and then gradually falling throughout the main clause with a sharp fall at the end, as seen in Figure 13-1. The break in the pitch contour in the middle marks the short pause between the two clauses. In example (13.17) and Figure 13-2 a similar pattern can be observed, although there is a sharp rise at the end of the condition clause.

(13.16) *Ka-palong-ni*   *kar*   *ka-han*   *nari*   *naur*   *a*   *ras,*
        2SG-want-OBJ   COMP   2SG-eat   thing   place   LOC   sea

        ka-van   *ne*   *van*   *vi*   *ras*   *ke-r-sar-e*
        2SG-go   LIM   go   go.to   sea   2SG.SEC-SBQT-fetch-OBJ

        ke-ruru   *gmay.*
        2SG.SEC-return   come
        'If you want to eat some seafood, you just go to the sea, fetch it and come back.' [69-40]
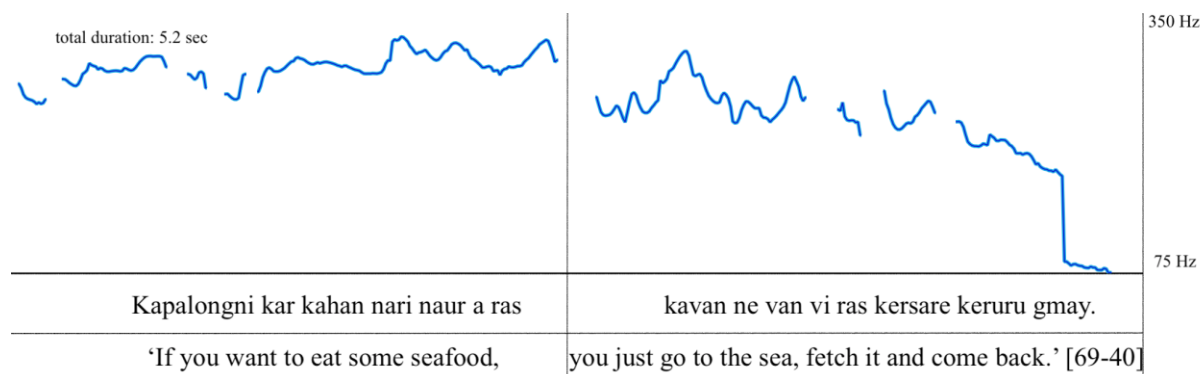
Figure 13-1. Pitch contour of the conditional clause in (13.16)

(13.17) *Nren nga-msah, ta-mas-varus pen aha ne van vi Lamav.*
Man   3SG-be.sick 3PL-NEC-paddle with here LIM go go.to Lamap
'If someone gets sick, they must paddle with them from here to Lamap.' [107-13]
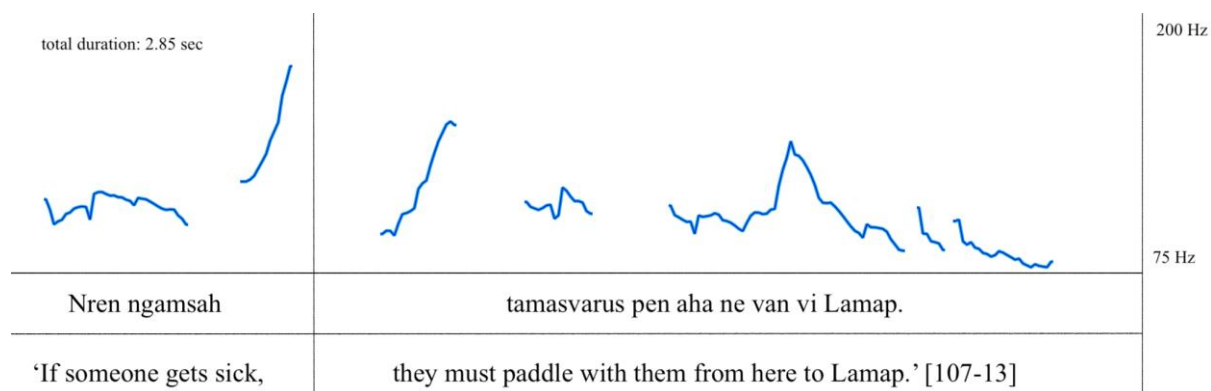
Figure 13-2. Pitch contour of the conditional clause in (13.17)

13.2.4 Event/state location clauses

Subordinate clauses referring to locations are not common and are normally phrased using the noun *naur* 'place' and a relative clause.

(13.18) ***Naur aven** mata-tov lön, nam nga-ppur ne ur ën.*
place REL 1PL.EXCL-live LOCP mosquito 3SG-be.full LIM place DIST
'Where we live, it is full of mosquitoes.' [69-53]

13.3 Sequential event constructions (SECs) and sequentiality

As described in the introduction to this chapter, a sequential event construction (SEC) is a chain of clauses that encode events which are temporally sequential in nature and are

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commonly related in a way that they can form a larger event package. All verbs in a SEC share the same subject referent and the second and any subsequent verbs are marked with a sequential event subject index. The following subsections describe the grammatical marking of SECs, the differences between SECs and other similar constructions (in Ahamb and other languages) and other ways to express sequentiality, which are not prototypical SECs.

13.3.1 Sequential event subject indexes as markers of SECs

The sequential event subject indexes, characterised by the vowel /e/ (and less commonly /ø/) (see §8.2.2), are used exclusively to mark the second and subsequent verb in SECs as in the examples in (13.19). The subject index on the first verb of SECs is usually a neutral subject index.

(13.19) a. ***Ta****-gmay*   ***te****-prag*   *gasin.*
  3PL-come   3PL.SEC-do   work
  'They come, they do the work.' [95-14]

  b. ***Mata****-van*   ***mete****-va-rës*   *nren   aven…*
  1PL.EXCL-go   1PL.EXCL.SEC-GO-see   man   REL
  'We go see a man, who…' [79-95]

  c. ***Nga****-rohroh*   *van*   *ne*   ***nge****-ro-kaykay*   ***nge****-ro-rang.*
  3SG-stay   go   LIM   3SG.SEC-call   3SG-IPFV-cry
  'She stayed for a while, she was calling [for help], she was crying.' [79-95]

The verbs in SECs are commonly marked with the subsequential marker *r-* (see §8.2.2.2), to emphasise the sequentiality of the events:

(13.20) a. ***Na****-rav*   *naser*   *s-ag*   ***ne-r****-van*   *vi*   *ras.*
  1SG-take   road   POSS.GNR-1SG   1SG.SEC-SBQT-go   go.to   sea
  'I hit the road and went to the sea.' [46-51]

  b. *…hën*   ***ta-r****-han-i*   ***te-r****-paj.*
  in.order.to   3PL-SBQT-eat-OBJ   3PL.SEC-SBQT-sleep
  '…so that they can eat it and go to sleep.' [17-42]

  c. ***Na****-va-jav-i*   ***nö-r****-va-lum-i*   *Lohormënay.*
  1SG-GO-cut-OBJ   1SG.SEC-SBQT-GO-plant-OBJ   L.
  'I will go cut it and then I will go plant it at Lohormënay.' [92-14]

d. ***Mata-r**-lötu*   *par*   ***mete**-ruru*   *gmay*
   1PL.EXCL.SBQT-worship   already   1PL.EXCL.SEC-return   come

   ***mete-r**-han*   *kanin.*
   1PL.EXCL.SEC-SBQT-eat   food
   'We will finish worshipping, come back and eat food.' [17-77]

In (13.21), the third verb in the sentence has a zero subject index, which can be attributed to the standard negator *sba-*. The negator is normally preceded by a reduced subject index (zero for the third-person singular, see §8.2.1.3). This suggests that standard negation takes precedence over sequentiality in determining the choice of subject index. Subject index omission in SEC-like clauses is discussed in §13.3.5 below.

(13.21)   *Vavu kakav*   *sa*   *tete*   *in*   ***nga**-gmay*   ***nge-r**-drëng*   *aru*
         grandmother   CLF.GNR   child   DIST   3SG-com   3SG.SEC-SBQT-look.for   3PL

         ***sba**-jaglön*   *aru.*
         NEG-find   3PL
         'This child's grandmother came, looked for them (but) did not find them.' [116-79]

13.3.2 SECs and coordination

The marking on the second and subsequent verb in SECs suggests a tighter juncture between the involved clauses than in coordination (see §13.4). For example, the sentence in (13.22) has four different clauses which encode a sequence of events that semantically hangs together (three clauses, if the second and third verb are treated as forming a switch-function SVC together). However, these verbs have different subjects and they are all marked with neutral subject indexes. Together they form a coordinating construction – a co-ranking structure consisting of independent clauses (Longacre 2007: 374-375).

(13.22)   ***Drata-r**-van*   ***na-r**-kaykay-ni*   ***nga**-r-gmay*   ***drata**-rav-ni.*
         1PL.INCL-SBQT-go   1SG-SBQT-call-OBJ   3SG-SBQT-come   1PL.INCL-bury-OBJ
         'We will go, I will call him, he will come [and] we will bury it.' [97-119]

As a comparison, the sentence in (13.23) comprises two clauses that express events that occur in sequence, they share the same subject and the sentence is therefore encoded as a SEC.

(13.23)   ***Na-r**-tüs*   *purpur-e*   *mi*   *beay*   ***ne-r**-vësvës-i.*
         1SG-SBQT-tear   break-OBJ   again   INTENT   1SG.SEC-SBQT-roll-OBJ
         'I have yet to tear it [the pandanus into strips] and roll it.' [27-144]

In (13.24) there is asyndetic coordination and a SEC within the same sentence. The subjects of the first verb, on the one hand, and the second and third verbs on the other hand, are different. The second and third clause constitute a SEC, marked with a sequential event subject index on the latter verb. Thus, this sentence illustrates coordination between the first clause as one coordinand and a SEC that encompasses the second and third clauses, as the second coordinand.

(13.24) *Lovuk*   *prahor*   [***na**-kaykay*   *hayug*]
         tomorrow   morning   1SG-call   2SG

         [***dra**-r-jumrah*   ***dre**-r-van*].
         1DU.INCL-SBQT-get.up   1DU.INCL.SEC-SBQT-go
         'Tomorrow morning, I will call you, we will get up and leave.' [24-10]

13.3.3 SECs and switch-reference/echo-reference

SECs are a type of chaining structure where the marking of the verbs suggests that one verb is "dominating" (Longacre 2007: 375) – in the case of Ahamb this is the first verb, which carries neutral indexing. SECs are different from switch-reference constructions, a type of chaining structure where the last verb in the chain is the main verb whose subject is specifically marked, and all preceding verbs carry a special morpheme which denotes whether their subject is the same or different (Payne 2006: 300-301). Echo-referencing constructions (ERCs), which have been documented in a number of Vanuatu languages (de Sousa & Hammond 2010; Hammond 2014; Barbour & Dodd 2017; Dodd 2018) have more similarities with SECs. In ERCs, the first verb in the chain is indexed conventionally and the echo index encodes the same subject, copying the person/number and mood information carried by the subject index to subsequent verbs. The difference between ERCs and SECs is that there is a full paradigm of sequential event indexes in Ahamb, whereas in ERCs in other languages, the echo referent index is usually invariable and simply signals that the addressee should copy the grammatical information of the initial verb's subject.

Crowley (2002: 181) suggests that "serial verb constructions may have evolved into echo subject constructions", based on the function of ERCs. Barbour & Dodd (2017) report a correlation between the lack of same subject SVCs and the existence of ERCs in two Malekula languages, V'ënen Taut and Larevet. There is a possible diachronic pathway for ERCs replacing same subject SVCs. This pathway involves V2 subject index omission and a

historical conjunction (the source of the echo index) taking the place of the V2 subject index. Ahamb is another Malekula language that lacks same subject SVCs and it is likely that SECs in Ahamb developed from (same-subject) SVCs following a similar pathway. Instead of a single echo subject index, in Ahamb, a full paradigm of new specialised subject indexes has developed for use in same-subject contexts.

13.3.4 SECs with coordinators

SECs can also include the coordinator *mjëg* 'then'[129] and the linker *ale* (borrowed from Bislama), which can also function as a coordinator with the same meaning.[130] The sentences in (13.25) are examples of sequentiality marked with both *mjëg* and sequential event subject indexing.

(13.25) a. **Mata**-*paj* *ha-mato*   **mjëg** **mete**-*r-gam*
    1PL.EXCL-carry POSS.ALIM-1PL.EXCL then 1PL.EXCL.SEC-SBQT-run

    van *vi* *ras.*
    go go.to sea
    'We take away our [food] and then we go to the sea.' [79-90]

  b. **Ra**-*subb* *van* **mjëg** **re**-*r-kar-e*   *vis-en…*
    3DU-sit go then 3DU-SBQT-say-OBJ to-CNSTR
    'They sat for a while then they said to…' [116-102]

In (13.26), sequentiality is marked by *ale* and sequential event subject indexing.

(13.26) **Nga**-*van* *va-rs* *naur* *aven* *naih* *ili* *nga-tovtov*
   3SG-go GO-see place REL fish ANA 3SG-be.full.of

   ale **nge**-*r-sar*   *nabon* *aven.*
   LK 3SG.SEC-SBQT-spear k.o.fish INDF.ART
   'He went and saw the place that is full of that fish and speared a *nabon*.' [37-154]

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[129] The sequential prefixed verb modifier *mjë-* (§8.2.1.4) does not normally occur in SECs. Only one example has been attested (see 8.22 in §8.2.2).

[130] There are also a handful of examples in the corpus where SECs have been attested with the subordinator *hën* 'so that, in order to' where the events in the main clause and the subordinate clause are sequential. Such examples may suggest a hypothetical spread of SECs to complex clauses involving subordination. Normally, *hën* is followed by a neutral subject index and the subsequential marker *r-* (§13.2.2.1).
 (i) *Ange* *sah* *vi* *mhar* *hën* **nge**-*sar* *naven* *nabrav.*
   3SG climb go.to above in.order.to 3SG.SEC-carry fruit breadfruit
   'He climbed up to get a breadfruit.' [232-6]

The sentence (13.27) has three clauses, all linked with *mjëg*. The first two share a subject and the second one is accordingly marked with a sequential event subject index. The change of subject in the third clause however blocks the occurrence of a sequential event subject index and a neutral index is used instead.

(13.27)   ***Ra**-paj*   *nsel*   ***mjëg***   ***re**-r-japor*   *barë-n*   ***mjëg***
          3DU-carry   knife   then   3DU-SBQT-cut.break   head-3SG   then

          bahobër   *ili*   ***nga**-maj.*
          shark   ANA   3SG-die
          'They brought a knife, then cut its head open, then the shark died.' [79-84]

Mjëg and *ale* can also link clauses that commonly denote events that occur in sequence, without sequential event subject indexing. Such clauses are treated as instances of syndetic coordination (see §13.4.1.2).

The rarely used borrowed coordinator *an*, has also been attested in a SEC:

(13.28)   *Ata-dronk*   ***an***   *te-ro-is.*
          3PL-be.drunk   and   3PL.SEC-IPFV-yell
          'They are drunk and they are yelling.' [1-52]

13.3.5 Unmarked sequential events with prior motion/position

Section 9.2.8 discussed clause-level deictic marking with the bare stems of the verbs *gmay* 'come', *van* 'go' and *roh* 'stay, be located', which denote direction of movement (to and from respectively) or position, relative to the deictic centre. The examples in (13.19) in §13.3.1 demonstrated the same forms[131] used as prototypical inflected verbs as the first verb in SECs to mark prior motion/position.

It is also common for sequences of events where the first event is expressed by a directional clause with *gmay* or *van* to have no subject marking[132] on the following verbs as in the examples in (13.29). The events in these examples are arguably sequential (and they belong

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[131] *Roh* appears in its simplex and reduplicated form (*rohroh*) when it functions as a verb, but only in its simplex form when it functions as a deictic marker (§9.2.8).

[132] In Ahamb, subject index omission can occur in most types of clauses, including simple clauses (§9.2.1.1). However, in the type of clauses discussed here, the lack of subject index is certainly more common than in most other types of clauses.

to a single larger event package), but they are not prototypical SECs because they lack the sequential subject indexing.

(13.29) a. [***Na-van*** *vi* *ras* *van*] [***drëngdrëng*** *nabut* *van*]
1SG-go   go.to sea go   look.for   boat   go

[***jaglön*** *nabut* *aven*]   [***sah*** *vi*   *lön*   *nabut*].
find   boat   INDF.ART   jump   go.to LOCP   boat
'I went to the sea, spent some time looking for a boat, found a boat, jumped in the boat.' [4-22]

b. ***Nga-gmay*** ***rës*** *mato.*
3SG-come   see   1PL.EXCL
'He came and saw us.' [89-29]

Similarly, when the first verb is *van* 'go' or *(roh)roh* 'be located', a subsequent verb commonly has no subject index but features the prefixed prior motion modifier *va-* (likely itself a grammaticalisation of *van*, see §8.3), or the imperfective aspect marker *ro-* (likely a grammaticalisation of *roh*, see §8.4), respectively. Examples are given in (13.30). In (13.30c), the first verb is *vi* 'go to', another motion verb, which is not common in such constructions but the construction is clearly analogous.[133]

(13.30) a. *Mara-**van**   **va**-ro-gas.*
1DU.EXCL-go   GO-IPFV-work
'The two of us went and worked.' [39-19]

b. *Nga-**rohroh**   **ro**-kuk   h-aru   **ro**-was.*
3SG-stay   IPFV-cook   POSS.ALIM-3DU   IPFV-wash
'She stayed, she was cooking for them, she was washing.' [39-15]

c. *Mata-r-**vi**   liur   **va**-jah   nmaniok.*
1PL.EXCL-SBQT-go.to   garden   GO-pull   cassava
'We go to the garden and pull out cassava.' [73-7]

Constructions of this type can be embedded within higher-level sequentiality constructions (see example 13.26 in §13.3.4).

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[133] Example (8.2e) in §8.1 demonstrates another such construction where the first verb is *tov* 'stay, remain', which is semantically similar to *(roh)roh*.

13.4   Coordination

Typologically coordination can be expressed with the help of coordinating conjunctions or it can be zero-marked (asyndetic). Asyndetic coordination is not always clearly different from the juxtaposition of two unrelated clauses. Generally, for two clauses to be included in a coordination construction, they need to be conceptually linked in some way (Payne 2006: 309).

Ahamb uses primarily an asyndetic strategy to mark conjunctive coordination and special coordinators to express adversative, disjunctive and augmentative coordination.

13.4.1 Conjunctive coordination

13.4.1.1   *Asyndetic conjunctive coordination*

In Ahamb, the noun phrase coordinator *drwan* (see §6.6) cannot function as a clausal coordinator and a true indigenous conjunctive coordinator is lacking. Conjunctive coordination in Ahamb is normally asyndetic.[134] An example of asyndetic coordination was given in (13.22) in §13.3.2 to demonstrate the difference between coordination and SECs. Two more examples are given in (13.31). In these examples, there is no significant pause between them, as opposed to two clauses that can be considered unrelated sentences.

(13.31)   a.   [*Nrang   nga-r-gmay   nge-ro-uv   nrokay   naur   ën*]ₛₑc
                  wind   3SG-SBQT-come   3SG.SEC-IPFV-blow   heliconia.leaf   place   DIST

  [*drata-r-müjmüj*].
  1PL.INCL-SBQT-be.wet
  'The wind will come, it will blow away the heliconia leaves and we will get wet.'
  [103-23][135]

  b.   [*Mata-bël-ni*]   [*niar   nga-sün-i.*]
        1PL.EXCL-throw-OBJ   sun   3SG-burn-OBJ
        'We put it on the ground [and] the sun burns (dries) it.' [27-72]

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[134] Zero marked coordination is also common on the noun phrase level (§6.6)

[135] This example is from a story where a few animals are seeking shelter from a coming cyclone and are considering hiding under some leaves, see Text 2 in Appendix B.

13.4.1.2 Syndetic conjunctive coordination

The borrowing *an* 'and' (from English)[136] has been attested in a handful of examples, although it is not commonly used.[137] Its usage is likely a manifestation of a borrowed storytelling technique. In some cases, it may primarily be used as a filler, especially among speakers who use English regularly. Example (13.32) demonstrates *an* linking coordinands that would normally be expressed by juxtaposition.

(13.32) *Nren*   *aven*   *nga-roh*   *drwan*   *napnevër*   *s-en*
        man   INDF.ART   3SG-stay   with   woman   POSS.GNR-3SG

        an   *ara-visen*   *nahre*   *nga-jkenene.*
        and   3DU-have   child   3SG-be.one
        'A man lives with his wife and they have one child.' [24-5]

In (see §13.3.4) it was demonstrated that the coordinator *mjëg* 'then' and the linker *ale* can complement the marking of SECs. *Mjëg* and *ale* can also link successive events without sequential event subject indexing as in (13.33a-b), where the subject is shared between the coordinated verbs. In (13.33c-d) the coordinands have different subjects.

(13.33) a. *Na-kan*   *par*   ***mjëg***   *na-va-paj.*
             1SG-eat   already   then   1SG-GO-sleep
             'I finished eating then I went to sleep.' [201-226]

        b. *A*   *nana*   *s-en*   *nga-ro-suv*   *narog*   *vüj*
             PERS   mother   POSS.GNR-3SG   3SG-IPFV-grate   laplap   banana

             ale   *nga-ruru*   *gmay.*
             LK   3SG-return   come
             'His mother was grating the banana for the laplap, then she came back.' [37.1-159]

        c. *Niar*   *nga-sün-i*   *nga-masmas,*   ***ale***   *mata-r-vësvës-i.*
             sun   3SG-burn-OBJ   3SG-be.dry   LK   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-roll-OBJ
             'The sun dries it, then we roll it.' [27-73]

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[136] Borrowings from Bislama are much more common than borrowings from English. However, the respective Bislama coordinator *mo*, which is much more available to Ahamb speakers, has not been borrowed into Ahamb. It is possible that *an* mostly occurs in the speech of Ahamb speakers who have relatively high degree of fluency in English.

[137] Such borrowing of coordinators in languages that otherwise manifest a preference for asyndetic coordination is typologically common (Haspelmath 2007: 7).

d. *Olfala   Haynding   nga-maj,   **ale**   mata-tov   van,   **ale**   a   Lis*
   Old   H.   3SG-die   LK   1PL.EXCL-stay   go   LK   PERS   L.

   *nga-maj,   **ale**   wawa   s-ag   a   Tamaki   nga-maj.*
   3SG-die   LK   brother   POSS.GNR-1SG   PERS   T.   3SG-die
   'Old Haynding died then some time passed (lit. we lived for a bit), then Lis died, then my brother Tamaki died.' [87-32]

13.4.2 Adversative coordination

To express adversative coordination, Ahamb employs the coordinator *bël* 'but':

(13.34) a. *Ahnaw   nga-drag   **bël**   nren   aven   nga-drag   sadr*
            1SG   3SG-be.strong   but   man   INDF.ART   3SG-be.strong   surpass

            ahnaw.
            1SG
            'I am strong, but there is a man who is stronger than me.' [254-26]

         b. *Gamuj   hana   ne   jbo-g   na-gmay   ne-vi   dekon*
            Before   1SG   LIM   alone-1SG   1SG-come   1SG.SEC-become   deacon

            ***bël**   taem   iha   mara-ru   nog   vi   dekon.*
            but   time   PROX   1DU.EXCL-be.two   already   become   deacon
            'Before I was the only one to become a deacon, but now two of us have become deacons.' [96-62]

Bël is also commonly used in the beginning of a clause without an adversative meaning. In such cases, it marks turn-taking in conversation. In a monologue, it sometimes introduces a new "event stage". For examples, see Text 2 in Appendix B, lines 30, 37, 42.

13.4.3 Disjunctive coordination

Disjunctive coordination of clauses is expressed with the help of the indigenous coordinator *je* or the borrowed coordinator *o*. Zero-marked disjunctive coordination has been attested between NPs (e.g. 6.32a in §6.6) but not between clauses.

(13.35) a. *Mëjba-novkar-e   mata-r-tëga   husür-i*
            1PE.NEG-know-OBJ   1PL.EXCL-SBQT-hold   follow-OBJ

            ***je**   bi   miti-tëga   husür-i?*
            or   NEGMOD   1PL.EXCL.IRR-hold   follow-OBJ
            'We don't know whether we will [be able to] adopt it or not.' [57-67]

b. *Mata-r-vi*   *liur*   *va-jah*   *nmaniok*   ***je***
    1PL.EXCL-SBQT-go   garden   GO-pull   cassava   or

    mata-jav   *navüj*   ***je***   *mata-hër*   *narbag,*   *nabbiag.*
    1PL.EXCL-cut   banana   or   1PL.EXCL-dig   wild.yam   taro
    'We go to the garden to pull out cassava or cut bananas or dig out yams [or/and] taro.'
    [73-8]

c. *Ka-bël-ni*   ***o***   *ka-sür-i.*
    2SG-throw-OBJ   or   2SG-burn-OBJ
    'You throw it away or you burn it.' [7-96]

Constructions of the type *whether ... or* use a combination of the complementiser *kar* (see §12.3.1) and a coordinator:

(13.36)   a. *Në-sba-novlkar-e*   ***kar***   *na-r-va-gas*   *kiaha*
          1SG-NEG-know-OBJ   COMP   1SG-SBQT-GO-work   today

          je   *nga-r-jhay.*
          or   3SG-SBQT-not.exist
          'I don't know whether I am going to work today or not.' [201-348]

       b. *Drëjba-novkar-e*   ***kar***,   *i-maj*   ***je***   *i-van*
          1PL.INCL.NEG-know-OBJ   COMP   3SG.IRR-die   or   3SG.IRR-go

          vi   *bi?*
          go.to   where
          'We don't know, did he die or where did he go?' [1-101]

13.4.4 Augmentative coordination

When the lexeme *aven* occurs between two identical instances of the same predicate, it acts as an intensifier of its meaning, serving as an augmentative coordinator. It is normally used with stative verbs (13.37a-d). The *aven* construction may be repeated a second time for even stronger emphasis (13.37c). The whole clause is repeated, including any objects, when *aven* refers to the whole clause (13.37e). This type of augmentation is common in the languages of Vanuatu (Henri 2019).

(13.37)   a. *Nga-mermer*   ***aven***   *nga-mermer.*
          3SG-dirty   AUG   3SG-dirty
          'It is very dirty.' [79-104]

b. *Ata-lugus* ***aven*** *ata-lugus.*
   3PL-be.many   AUG   3PL-be.many
   'There were very many of them.' [41-32]

c. *Nga-vuy* ***aven*** *nga-vuy* ***aven*** *nga-vuy.*
   3SG-be.good   AUG   3SG-be.good   AUG   3SG-be.good
   'It is very very good.' [69-39]

d. *Tete   ki-li   nga-palong   nga-sabb   **aven**   nga-sabb.*
   child   DIM-DEM   3SG-feel   3SG-be.bad   AUG   3SG-be.bad
   'The child is feeling very bad.' [67-24]

e. *Ta-palong   narbaruh ki-li   **aven***
   3PL-like   girl   DIM-DEM   AUG

   ta-palong   narbaruh   ki-li
   3PL-like   girl   DIM-DEM
   'They like this girl very much.' [46-18]

Less commonly, *aven* can be used without repetition of the relevant constituent:

(13.38)   *Nga-leb   habat   **aven**.*
            3SG-be.big   much   AUG
            'It is very big.' [79-50]

Augmentation with *aven* is less commonly attested between NPs:

(13.39)   a.   *a   jüdr   **aven**   a   jüdr*
                 LOC   away   AUG   LOC   away
                 'very far away' [18.1-215]

          b.   *nravoh   **aven**   nravoh*
                 large.group   AUG   large.group
                 'a very large group (of people)' [89-101]

APPENDICES

Appendix A. The Ahamb corpus and other collected data

The analysis in this work is based on data in the Ahamb corpus – a collection of annotated Ahamb texts that were collected between 2017 and 2020 (see §1.5). The corpus consists of around 93,000 tokens.

The data is organised in bundles, as they have been archived with ELAR (Rangelov 2020) . Each bundle has a unique ID in the format [ahbXXX], where XXX is the numerical index of the bundle. The examples in this thesis contain a reference to the corpus that includes the numerical index of the bundle ID (see §1.5.3).

The bulk of the corpus consists of the transcriptions of around 22 hours of Ahamb speech, most of which was recorded in video format. Each bundle contains an audio and video (where relevant) file, a metadata file and an annotation file.

Bundles [ahb001]-[ahb116] (111 bundles in total, some bundle IDs are void) contain recordings of narratives and other speech (both monologues and stories that were told jointly by more than one person), songs, ceremonies etc. of different genres.

Bundles [ahb401]-[ahb406] contain spontaneous conversations recorded during elicitation sessions.

Bundles [ahb501]-[ahb504] contain video-recorded targeted elicitation sessions.

The following texts are not based on recorded speech and contain annotation and metadata files:

Bundle [ahb201] and bundles [ahb231]-[ahb238] contain fieldnotes from unrecorded elicitation sessions and observation.

Bundle [ahb211] contains a short historical text.

Bundles [ahb251]-[ahb257] contain translations of the Vanua Readers primary school books from Bislama into Ahamb.

Table A-1 lists all bundles that form the Ahamb corpus, including the numerical index of the bundle ID, a title, genre, recording format (V=video, A=audio only) and the initials of speakers (see Table A-3 for the full names of speakers).

Table A-2 lists other data that have been archived but have not been annotated and are not considered part of the Ahamb corpus.

Table A-3 lists the speakers that have been recorded or were otherwise involved in data collection.

Table A-1. Data bundles in the Ahamb corpus

Bundle ID	Title	Genre	Recording format	Speaker (initials)	Note
Narratives (including songs):					
001	Ship lost at sea during hurricane	history	V	TA	
002	The story of the five fingers (Virahrah and the coconut)	kastom story	V	GF	
003	The earthquake of 1965	history + song	V	TA GF MA TS MT	
004	How to shell out copra	procedural discourse	V	YO	3 files
005	How people used to hunt turtles	procedural discourse	V	MT GF MA	
006	How cocoa was introduced to Ahamb	history	V	GF	
007	How to weave mats	procedural discourse	V	MK	
008	A boy meets the evil spirit Livenbbëbhaw	disobedience story	V	GF	
009	Two women meet the evil spirit Subarbav	kastom story	V	TS	
010	The trickster Legleg Pirov	kastom story	V	MT	
011	The story of a man shot by a rifle	history	V	MT GF JB	
012	The evil spirit Subarbav who lives in a rock	kastom story	V	JB	
013	Two white men who lived on Ahamb Island	history	V	GF	
014	Life on Ahamb in the middle of the 20th century	history	V	GF MT	
015	The Christianisation of Ahamb Island	history + song	V	JB GF MA MT TS	
016	The wild pig hunter	kastom story	V	GF	
017	How to make simboro	procedural discourse	V	MK	
018	A trip to Wellington	personal story	V	BK	2 files
019	The life of Morvel	personal story	V	MT	

020	Working in Noumea	personal story	V	GF ES	
021	Kastom ranks on Ahamb	history	V	HT	
022	Life in the past	history	V	GF MT	
023	Expectations of the Transformation	history	V	AW	
024	The story of the tiger and the crocodile	children's story	V	AW	
025	A failed brother-sister reunion	kastom story	V	HS	
026	Livalo meets the evil spirit	history	V	MT	
027	Mat types	personal story, procedural discourse	V	AJ	
028	Prayer in Ahamb 1	prayer	V	MT	
029	The monkey that was a white man	kastom story	V	MT	
030	Monkey fights a snake / Virahrah and the coconut	kastom story	V	GF MT	
031	Grem takes a trip	personal story	V	GF	
032	Two men killed	history	V	MT	
033	Blackbirding in Fiji	history	V	MT	
034	The white evil spirit	kastom story	V	TS	
035	Cyclone on the sea	personal story	V	TS	
036	Shark attack	personal story	V	KF	
037	Sea water in the bush	kastom story	V	TS	2 files
038	The mainland village of Barmar	personal story, history	A	WH	
039	The mainland village of Lasovsa (Bariasvëg)	personal story, history	A	JA	
040	A story of disobedience	story of disobedience	V	KF	
041	Making and selling laplap pumpkin	procedural discourse, personal story	V	RF	
042	How to build a canoe	procedural discourse	V	JB KR EF	
043	Workplace injury	personal story + song	V	GF MT JB MA	
044	The childless woman	children's story	V	EM	
045	The man and the rat	children's story	V	GS	
046	Sad story about brother and sister	children's story	V	GFe	
047	The giant gets married	children's story	V	EM	
048	Shark attack 2	personal story	V	MT	
049	The life of Aisen Obet	personal story, history	V	AO	

050	Will you marry a virgin girl?	kastom song	V	KS
051	The evil spirit Varvlu	kastom story	V	BJ
052	Renaur history and ancestors	history	V	JS
053	A boy gets killed by a snake (story of disobedience)	story of disobedience	V	SB
054	Diarrhoea outbreak	history	V	JS
055	Lobster for schoolbooks	personal story	V	TS
056	Sunk canoe	personal story	V	TS
057	Transformation – religious ceremony	history	V	GF MT TS
058	About yams	history	V	JB
059	Cyclone Pam	history	V	MT
060	Football on Ahamb	history	V	MT
061	Traditional fishing method	procedural discourse	V	YA
062	Instructions to a young boy	conversation	V	YA
063	How to use fish poison tree to catch fish	procedural discourse	V	YA
064	Traditional canoes	procedural discourse	V	YA
065	The forgotten baby	children's story	V	MJ
066	A child teaches his father a lesson	children's story	V	MJ
067	The illiterate priest	children's story	V	MJ
068	The boy and the stingray	story of disobedience	V	NA
069	Life in Harun on the mainland	personal story, history	V	NA
070	The shark killer	personal story	V	SS
071	Nasëvsëvin (gift giving ceremony)	ceremony, public speech	V	MT HT KF
072	Contemporary marriage	local life, procedural discourse	A	KK
073	Laplap	procedural discourse	A	MK
074	Kastom marriage	history	A	KT
075	Circumcision ceremony	history	A	KT
076	Three women in a canoe	history	V	NF
077	Prayer in Ahamb 2	prayer	V	NP
078	Benediction in Ahamb	prayer	V	EM
079	The dead whale	history	V	TA
081	About canoes	history	V	IS
084	How graves are made	local life	V	HS
085	The different types of bananas	local life	V	KS

086	House construction	procedural discourse	V	KS
087	Head binding	history	V	HSr
088	How Ahamb was settled (partial)	kastom story	V	PV
089	Cave in North Malekula	personal story	V	JJ
090	Kastom funeral in Southwest Bay	personal story, history	V	VE TA
091	Drinking kava in Vila	personal story	V	TW TA
092	The history of kava	history	V	TJ
093	The story of the lost child	kastom story	V	HSr
095	Mark 10:30	bible story	V	EB
096	The first Ahamb migrant to the mainland	personal story, history	V	JK
097	The evil spirit Limahnaur causes famine	kastom story	V	PV TA
098	Church service	ceremony	V	TA
099	Mark Andri's travels	personal story	V	MA
100	The life of James	personal story	V	JB
101	Work in Vila (story and song)	personal story + song	V	GF MV MA JB
102	A fall from a tree	personal story	V	TS
103	How animals survive cyclones	kastom story	A	PB
104	Singing in Renaur	song	V	PJ FJ MW NS MJ
105	Song about Jesus	song	V	JB, Comm
106	The parrot and the flying fox	kastom story	V	MS
107	Transportation on Ahamb	history, local life	V	MS
108	A trip to Ambrym	personal story	V	MS
109	Religious song	song	V	TJ Comm
110	A few religious songs in Ahamb	song	V	MV HT HS Comm
111	All the modern things	history	V	PV
112	Naviren – a fishing method	history, procedural discourse	V	PV
115	Woman gets lost in the bush	kastom story	V	YO
116	Grandma is an evil spirit	children's story, kastom story	V	GS

Field notes:

201	Field notes from FT1	notes		

Historical text:

211	Song about Nicodemus (written by Mesak Masinge[†])	old text	notes	GF

Elicitation 2020

231	Elicitation 2020 1	elicitation	notes	MS
232	Elicitation 2020 2	elicitation	notes	MS
233	Elicitation 2020 3	elicitation	notes	MS
234	Elicitation 2020 4	elicitation	notes	MS
235	Elicitation 2020 5	elicitation	notes	MS
236	Elicitation 2020 6	elicitation	notes	MS
237	Elicitation 2020 7	elicitation	notes	MS

Field notes:

| 238 | Notes from FT2 and FT3 | notes | | |

Translation from Bislama of Vanua Raders

251	Natapoa	translation	notes	LC
252	Abu Kalua wetem bigfala blak snek (Grandpa Kalua and the big black snake)	translation	notes	LC
253	Laf blong ded (Death's laugh)	translation	notes	LC
254	Man we i strong bitim ol narawan (The strongest man)	translation	notes	LC
255	Ben i traem blong wokbaot (Ben is learning how to walk)	translation	notes	LC
256	Wan gudfala man blong wokem haos (A man who knows how to build a house)	translation	notes	LC
257	Lukluk gud bifo yu daeva (Look carefully before you dive)	translation	notes	LC

Spontaneous conversation:

401	Conversation about birds 1	conversation	A	TA JB MA GF ES
402	Conversation about birds 2	conversation	A	TA GF MT MA MN
403	Conversation about breadfruit	conversation	A	TA GF MA TJ
404	Conversation different activities	conversation	A	TA GF MT
405	Conversation about flowers	conversation	A	TA MA TS JB MT ES HT
406	Conversation about grasses	conversation	A	TA ES TS MT JB

Targeted elicitation:

501	Body parts elicitation	elicitation	V	MS
502	Elicitation of possessive constructions	elicitation	V	MS
503	Elicitation of possessive constructions: Translations from Bislama	elicitation	V	MS
504	Cut/break verbs elicitation	elicitation	V	MS

Table A-2. Archived materials that are not annotated and are not part of the Ahamb corpus

Bundle ID	Title	Recording format	Speaker (initials)
601	Photographs from FT1 and FT2	images	-
602	Photographs from FT3	images	-
701-708	Recordings of citation forms for phonetic analysis	V, A	EM GS GFe MJ JKa YA
801-803	Elicitation of kinship terms and colours	A	YA GFe
901-904	Unannotated recordings	A/V	various speakers

Table A-3. Speakers who have been recorded or otherwise assisted in data collection

initials	full name	gender	birth year
AJ	Ailin Jon Woka	F	1974
AO	Aisen Obet	M	1945
AW	Elder Abel Wait Sam	M	1970
BJ	Beniam Jon Sailas	M	1985
BK	Bongnie Kalsay	M	1975
Comm	communal participation	-	-
EB	Elder Eddi Sema (Eddiboy)	M	1967
EF	Edward Frank	M	1977
EM	Ena Mark	F	1982
ES	Elder Edwin Sedrak Andrew Aingil	M	1956
FJ	Fision Jek	M	1973
GF	Grem Fred Aimatleu	M	1940
GFe	Gleta Fedrid	F	1979
GS	Glesiana Salma	F	1974
HO	Pastor Hebet Obet	M	1977
HS	Chief Harold Sam	M	1959
HSr	Haivuv Salnarmar	M	1947
HT	Chief Hedrick Tom Vanbir	M	1970
IS	Deacon Ian Spoki	M	1967
JA	Jon As Masi	M	1945
JB	James Bhavës†	M	1946
JJ	Jameson Jonedi	M	1982
JK	Jek Kalsen Jek	M	1962
JKa	Jon Kalsay	M	1767
JS	Jon Sailas Jek	M	1953
KF	Chief Kaltau Frank Kaldriv Subbialial	M	1965
KK	Kalmase Kalsay	M	1977
KR	Kalwin Rörmasing	M	1967
KS	Kolen Sam Drunglel†	M	1949
KT	Pastor Kumma Titek	M	1947
LC	Ahamb Language Committee	-	-
MA	Mark Andri Fred	M	1943
MJ	Meri Joj	F	1980

MJ	Makenli Jek	M	1978
MK	Maryan Kalmase	F	1977
MN	Makina Thomas	M	1970
MS	Max Jack Sohnaur	M	1992
MT	Morvel Tom Vanbir	M	1944
MW	Marita Waitli	F	1978
NA	Nela Aisak	F	1988
NF	Nancy Fred	F	1972
NP	Nile Pelëv	F	1977
NS	Natong Simion	F	1978
NV	Noki Vandali	M	1962
PB	Pera Benjman	F	1953
PJ	Pila John	F	1978
PV	Pita Vanbir	M	1942
RF	Ronda Fred Aimatleu	F	1959
SB	Steven Bhavës	M	1958
SS	Skipson Skepa	M	1962
TA	Elder Tom Ansel Thomson	M	1967
TJ	Tom Silik Jek	M	1950
TS	Tomson Sam Drunlel	M	1930
TW	Terry Wajon	M	1967
VE	Velori Edwin	F	1967
WH	Welken Haidrivleu	M	1975
YA	Yakensen Abel	M	1972
YO	Yafet Obet	M	1969

Appendix B. Ahamb texts

Text 1. Grandfather Kalua and the big black snake

This story is a translation of a reader from the Vanua Readers series of primary school readers in Bislama. The original title in Bislama is *Abu Kalua wetem bigfala blak snek.* The story was written by Nanette Vakessa and it was published by the Curriculum Development Unit of Vanuatu's Ministry of Education and Training in 1996. The story was translated into Ahamb by members of the Ahamb Language Committee in July 2017. This text is archived in ELAR as bundle [ahb232].

1. *Vavu tötöt   Kalua   drwan   nabëltën   namer   mermer*
   grandfather K.   and   big.one   snake   be.black
   Grandfather Kalua and the big black snake

2. *Vavu tötöt   Kalua   nga-rohroh   drwan   nakemhaybbënin   s-en*
   grandfather K.   3SG-stay   with   grandchild   POSS.GNR-3SG
   Grandfather Kalua lived with his two grandchildren

3. *ra-ru   Balu   drwan   Malua.   Lön   naur   prahor   aven*
   3DU-be.two   B.   and   M.   LOCP   place   morning   INDF.ART
   Balu and Malua. One morning

4. *nga-kaykay   mhaybb-ën   s-en   aru   mi   nga-kar-e,*
   3SG-call   gradchild-CNSTR POSS.GNR-3SG   3DU   again 3SG-say-OBJ
   he called his two grandchildren and told them,

5. *"Rohbay   na-r-van   sar   naven   nabrav   nha-drato   hën*
   in.future   1SG-SBQT-go   carry fruit   breadfruit POSS.ALIM-1PL.INCL in.order.to
   "I am going to bring some breadfruit for us to

6. *drata-r-han-i   livher.   Mru   mra-rohroh   aha   ro-jav   nhabb*
   1PL.INCL-SBQT-eat-OBJ   noon   2DU   2DU-stay   here IPFV-cut   firewood
   eat for lunch. You two should stay here and cut some firewood

7. *ngel-drës   hën   drata-r-tëga   nhabb."   Varah   tötöt   Kalua*
   NSG-INDF   in.order.to   1PL.INCL-SBQT-hold   fire   then   grandfather K.
   so that we can make fire." Then grandfather Kalua

8. *nga-vi   pisör   hën   nga-sar   naven   nabrav.   Nga-van*
   3SG-go.to garden in.order.to 3SG-carry fruit breadfruit 3SG-go
   went to the garden to bring breadfruit. He went away and

9. *nge-soh   barën nabrav   ange sah   vi   mhar   hën*
   3SG.SEC-reach trunk breadfruit 3SG climb go.to up in.order.to
   reached the breadfruit tree, he climbed up to

10. *nge-sar   naven   nabrav.   Bël nga-ro-jëbur   vi   pen   nga-rs*
    3SG.SEC-carry fruit breadfruit but 3SG-IPFV-descend go.to down 3SG-see
    get some breadfruit. But when he was coming down he saw

11. *namer aven   nga-vësvës garu lön   nhay nabrav   inën.*
    snake INDF.ART 3SG-roll round LOCP tree breadfruit DIST
    a snake that had wound around the breadfruit tree.

12. *Vavu tötöt Kalua nga-mrah   habat. Nogha nga-ro-nov-ni   lön*
    grandfather K.   3SG-be.afraid much now 3SG-IPFV-think-OBJ LOCP
    Grandfather Kalua was very scared. He was now thinking about

13. *naser man bi nga-prag-ni   hën   nga-r-gam   dran   namer*
    way which 3SG-make-OBJ in.order.to 3SG-SBQT-run away.from snake
    what to do in order to escape the snake.

14. *ili. Nga-ro-nov-ni   kar   nga-svoh   vi   pen   bël nga-rohroh*
    ANA 3SG-IPFV-think-OBJ COMP 3SG-jump go.to down but 3SG-be.located
    He was thinking of jumping down but he was

15. *mhar habat lön   nhay ili. Nga-ro-nov-ni   kar   nga-svoh   lön*
    up much LOCP tree ANA 3SG-IPFV-think-OBJ COMP 3SG-jump LOCP
    too high up in the tree. He was thinking about jumping onto

16. *nhay mnaj   bël nhay ili nga-rohroh   a   jüdr habat.*
    tree different but tree ANA 3SG-be.located LOC away much
    another tree but that tree was too far away.

17. *Nga-sar   naven   nabrav   nga-rür,   nga-kob   namer lön*
    3SG-carry fruit breadfruit 3SG-be.three 3SG-stone snake LOCP
    He took three breadfruit and he tried stoning the snake

18. *naven   nabrav   nga-rür   bël nga-kob   pahser. Nga-drëng*
    fruit breadfruit 3SG-be.three but 3SG-stone miss 3SG-look.for
    with the three breadfruit but he didn't succeed. He looked for

19. *naven nabrav ngel-aven mi hën nga-r-kob namer*
fruit breadfruit NSG-INDF.ART again in.order.to 3SG-SBQT-stone snake
more breadfruit to stone the snake

20. *bël naven nabrav nga-jhay. Nogha nga-nov-ni lön angay*
but fruit breadfruit 3SG-not.exist now 3SG-think-OBJ LOCP 3SG
but there were no more breadfruit left. Now he thought to

21. *jbo-n kar, "Na-r-kavër na-r-traj van vi pen."*
oneself-CNSTR COMP 1SG-SBQT-close.eyes 1SG-SBQT-slide go go.to down
himself, "I am going to close my eyes and I am going to slide down."

22. *Vavu tötöt Kalua nga-kavër nga-traj vi pen lön nhay.*
grandfather K. 3SG-close.eyes 3SG-slide go.to down LOCP tree
Grandfather Kalua closed his eyes and slid down the tree.

23. *Nga-jëngav namr-en s-en mi ne nga-rs namer mermer*
3SG-open eye-CNSTR POSS.GNR-3SG again LIM 3SG-see snake be.black
He opened his eyes again and saw the black snake

24. *nga-rohroh lön nran a pen. Nga-maj nog.*
3SG-be.located LOCP ground LOC down 3SG-die already
lying down on the ground. It was already dead.

25. *Vavu tötöt Kalua nga-paj nhay aven blav nga-jëh namer*
grandfather K. 3SG-carry tree INDF.ART be.long 3SG-push snake
Grandfather Kalua took a long stick and pushed the snake

26. *ili van vi jüdr lön nhay. Nga-sar nrawn sürmaru*
ANA go go.to away LOCP tree 3SG-carry leaf coconut.leaf
away with the stick. He brought dry coconut leaves

27. *masmas nge-r-sur namer ili.*
be.dry 3SG.SEC-SBQT-burn snake ANA
and then he burnt the snake.

28. *Lön nabong inën Balu drwan Malua aru ara-roh tarven*
LOCP time DIST B. and M. 3DU 3DU-stay until
At that time Balu and Malua were waiting for

29. *vavu tötöt   Kalua   lön   nalikalim.   Naur   nga-ro-vi   livher*
    grandfather K.   LOCP   house   place 3SG-IPFV-become   noon
    grandfather Kalua in the house. It was already noon

30. *nogay   bël   vavu tötöt   s-aru   sba-ruru   rohjer.*
    already but   grandfather POSS.GNR-3DU NEG-return yet
    but their grandfather had not come back yet.

31. *Ara-ro-nov-ni   hën   ara-van   drëngdrëng   ange.*
    3DU-IPFV-think-OBJ   in.order.to 3DU-go   look.for   3SG
    The two of them thought of going out to look for him.

32. *Nabong naur   ara-jaglön   angay,   nga-ro-sar   twan   naven*
    when   3DU-find   3SG   3SG-IPFV-carry   heap.up   fruit
    When they found him, he was heaping up the

33. *nabrav   ur   nga-jkenene.   Vavu tötöt   Kalua   nga-kar*
    breadfruit place   3SG-be.one   grandfather K.   3SG-say
    breadfruit in one place. Grandfather Kalua told

34. *nasëlvarin   s-en   vis-en   aru.   Ara-men   aven   ara-men*
    story   POSS.GNR-3SG   to-CNSTR   3DU   3DU-laugh AUG   3DU-laugh
    his story to them. They laughed a lot at

35. *a   vavu tötöt   s-aru.   Varah   ata-sar   naven   nabrav*
    PERS   grandfather POSS.GNR-3DU   then   3PL-carry   fruit   breadfruit
    their grandfather. Then they put the breadfruit

36. *vi   lön   nabuburun   nhadr   nga-rür.   Varah   ata-paj-i   vi*
    go.to   LOCP   inside   bag   3SG-be.three then   3PL-carry-OBJ go.to
    inside three bags. Then they carried them to

37. *likalim   s-ato.   Varah   ata-pan-i   nga-manug   ata-han-i*
    house   POSS.GNR-3PL   then   3PL-cook-OBJ 3SG-be.ready 3PL-eat-OBJ
    their home. Then they cooked them and they had a nice meal

38. *nga-vuy   tuhrav.*
    3SG-be.good   afternoon
    in the afternoon.

Text 2. Where animals hide from cyclones

This kastom story (folk story) was told by Pera Benjman, a female speaker born in 1953, from the mainland village of Renaur. The story was recorded on December 3, 2017. Max Jack Sohnaur assisted with the transcription and translation of this text. The recording is archived in ELAR in bundle [ahb103].

1. *Na-sër   nasëlvarin husür   nrang tamës.   Na-r-sëlvar   husür*
   1SG-tell   story   follow cyclone   1SG-SBQT-tell.story   follow
   I am going to tell a story about a cyclone. I am going to talk about

2. *nrang tamës aven nga-r-gmay.   Mata-palongur nrang tamës*
   cyclone   REL   3SG-SBQT-come   1PL.EXCL-hear   cyclone
   a cyclone that reached our place. We heard that a cyclone was coming.

3. *nga-ro-gmay.   Nman   aven nahs-en   ange navimer nga-van*
   3SG-IPFV-come   bird   REL   name-CNSTR   3SG   dove   3SG-go
   A bird, whose name is 'dove' went and saw

4. *nge-r-va-s   nagaw. Nga-kar-e   vis-en   nagaw   nge-kar,*
   3SG.SEC-SBQT-GO-see spider   3SG-say-OBJ to-OBJ   spider   3SG.SEC-say
   the spider. It said to the spider,

5. *"Ey na-palongur ata-kar   nrang tamës nga-r-gmay.*
   ITJ   1SG-hear   3PL-say   cyclone   3SG-SBQT-come
   "Hey, I hear they say a cyclone is coming.

6. *Drata-drëngdrëng maliswahin   drës s-drato."*
   1PL.INCL-look.for   hiding.place INDF POSS.GNR-1PL.INCL
   Let's find a hiding place for us."

7. *Nangaw nga-kar, "Ale, klah, drata-van."*
   spider   3SG-say   LK   ok   1PL.INCL-go
   The spider said, "OK, let's go."

8. *Ata-van mi   atö-r-va-rs   nman aven bël nman in*
   3PL-go   again 3PL.SEC-SBQT-GO-see bird   REL   but   bird   DIST
   They were walking now and they met a bird, but this bird,

9. *në-sba-novkar nahs-en   nman inën. Ata-van ata-rür   nogay.*
   1SG-NEG-know   name-CNSTR bird   DIST   3PL-go   3PL-be.three already
   I don't know the name of that bird. They were walking, three of them now.

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10. *Ata-van   atö-r-va-rs   nman ili   te-kar,   "Ey, ata-kar*
    3PL-go   3PL.SEC-SBQT-GO-see bird   ANA 3PL.SEC-say ITJ   3PL-say
    They walked and they met that bird and [later] they spoke, "Hey, they say

11. *nrang tamës drës nga-r-gmay   drata-va-drëng   maliswahin*
    cyclone   INDF 3SG-SBQT-come 1PL.INCL-GO-look.for hiding.place
    a cyclone is coming, let's go and find a hiding place

12. *drës s-drato."   Bël nman ili   nga-kar-e   kar,   "Aaa*
    INDF poss.gnr-1PL.INCL but bird   ANA 3SG-say-OBJ COMP ITJ
    for us." But the bird said, "Oh,

13. *npajën nbag   iha   nga-nav   roh   hën*
    branch banyan.tree PROX 3SG-be.enough be.located in.order.to
    the branch of this banyan tree is enough for

14. *drata-va-subb lön.   Drata-va-subb ur   ën   nrang be*
    1PL.INCL-GO-sit LOCP 1PL.INCL-GO-sit place DIST wind   NEGMOD
    us to sit on. Let's go sit in that place, the wind

15. *i-gmay   uv   jüdr   drato."   Bël navimer nga-kar, "Aaa bi*
    3SG.IRR-come blow away 1PL.INCL but dove   3SG-say ITJ   NEGMOD
    won't be able to come and blow us off the branch." But the dove said, "Ooo, we

16. *driti-swah   ur   ën.   Ur ën   rohbay   drata-r-suswah   ai*
    1PL.INCL.IRR-hide palce DIST place DIST in.future 1PL.INCL-SBQT-hide here
    cannot hide in that place. In that place, we will hide there,

17. *nrang nga-r-uv   jüdr   drato   drata-r-drëmdrëm." Ta-kar,*
    wind   3SG-SBQT-blow away 1PL.INCL 1PL.INCL-SBQT-fall 3PL-say
    the wind will blow us off [the branch] to the ground." They said,

18. *"Drata-van bay drata-va-drëng   maliswahin drës mi   bay.*
    1PL.INCL-go ITJ 1PL.INCL-GO-look.for hiding.place INDF again ITJ
    "Let's go look for a different hiding place.

19. *Ale ta-van van van va-rs   nmahobb. Ta-va-kar-e*
    LK   3PL-go go   go   GO-see lizard   3PL-GO-say-OBJ
    Then they walked for a while and met a lizard. They told

20. *vis-en   mahobb ta-kar,   "Ey nrang tamës aven   ata-kar*
    to-CNSTR lizard 3PL-say ITJ cyclone   INDF.ART 3PL-say
    the lizard, "Hey they say a cyclone is coming,

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21. *nga-r-gmay,   nabëltri nrang tamës   rohbay   nga-r-gmay*
   3SG-SBQT-come big.one cyclone   in.future 3SG-SBQT-come
   a big cyclone is going to come,

22. *drata-müjmüj." Bël nmahobb nga-kar-e   vis-en   atëngel ili*
   1PL.INCL-be.wet but lizard   3SG-say-OBJ to-CNSTR 3PL   ANA
   we will get wet." But the lizard said to them,

23. *ato nga-kar, "Aaa, drata-r-swah   lön   nrokay   naur*
   3PL 3SG-say ITJ   1PL.INCL-SBQT-hide LOCP heliconia.leaf place
   "Oh, let's just hide in these [large] heliconia leaves here,

24. *ha   ne, nrokay   naur   ha   ta-mes   nga-vuy*
   PROX LIM large.leaf place PROX 3PL-be.dry 3SG-be.good
   these leaves they are very dry (=they provide shelter),

25. *drata-swah   lön   be   driti-müjmüj."*
   1PL.INCL-hide LOCP NEGMOD 1PL.INCL.IRR-be.wet
   we can hide in them, we won't get wet."

26. *Bël ata-kar, "Awa, rohbay   drata-r-swah   ur   ën,*
   but 3PL-say no   in.future 1PL.INCL-SBQT-hide place DIST
   But they said, "No, we are going to hide in that place,

27. *nrang nga-r-gmay   nge-ro-uv   nrokay   naur   ën*
   wind 3SG-SBQT-come 3SG.SEC-IPFV-blow heliconia.leaf place DIST
   the wind will come, it will blow away the heliconia leaves over there

28. *drata-r-müjmüj,   drata-drëng   drës mi   bay." Gan   mi*
   1PL.INCL-SBQT-be.wet 1PL.INCL-look.for INDF again ITJ   like.this again
   and we will get wet, we will look for another place." Like that,

29. *ata-van. Ata-van van van atö-r-va-rs   naur   nmanki*
   3PL-go 3PL-go   go   go   3PL.SEC-SBQT-GO-see place monkey
   they went. They were walking for a while then they saw a place where a monkey

30. *nga-sah   roh   lön   pajën hay. Nga-paj roh.   Bël ata-kar,*
   3SG-climb be.located LOCP branch tree 3SG-sleep be.located but 3PL-say
   was sitting up on a tree branch. It was sleeping. They said,

31. *"Ey, nrang tamës aven ata-kar nga-ro-gmay, kur-e*
    ITJ cyclone INDF.ART 3PL-say 3SG-IPFV-come make-OBJ
    "Hey, they say a cyclone is coming, meaning

32. *mata-gmay ro-drëng maliswahin. Bël manki nga-kar,*
    1PL.EXCL-come IPFV-look.for hiding.place but monkey 3SG-say
    we are coming to look for a hiding place. But the monkey said,

33. *"Awa, nrang tamës nga-r-gmay drata-r-jëbur vi pen*
    no cyclone 3SG-SBQT-come 1PL.INCL-SBQT-descend go.to down
    "No, the cyclone will come, we will just go down

34. *ne drete-r-swah lön barën hay aven na-paj*
    LIM 1PL.INCL.SEC-SBQT-hide LOCP trunk tree REL 1SG-sleep
    and we will hide in the trunk of the tree in which I am sleeping

35. *roh lön iha." "Awa, rohbay drata-r-swah lön*
    be.located LOCP PROX no in.future 1PL.INCL-SBQT-hide LOCP
    here." "No, we will hide in that

36. *barën hay inën, naus nga-ro-us drata-r-müjmüj.*
    trunk tree DIST rain 3SG-IPFV-rain 1PL.INCL-SBQT-be.wet
    tree trunk, rain will come and we will get wet.

37. *Drata-va-drëng drës mi bay." Bël manki ili nga-kar,*
    1PL.INCL-GO-look.for INDF again ITJ but monkey ANA 3SG-say
    We will go look for another one." And the monkey said,

38. *"Ale klah drata-r-van." Ata-van van van atö-r-va-rs*
    LK ok 1PL.INCL-SBQT-go 3PL-go go go 3PL.SEC-SBQT-GO-see
    "OK, let's go." They walked for a while then they saw

39. *nvar aven nga-subb roh. "Mta-van pës nvar iha!"*
    stone INDF.ART 3SG-sit be.located 2PL-go round stone PROX
    a rock that was standing [on the ground]. "Go walk around this rock!"

40. *Ata-van pës nvar ili mjëg atö-rs naburun nga-rohni.*
    3PL-go round stone ANA then 3PL.SEC-see hole 3SG-exist
    They walked around the rock then they say that there was a hole in it.

41. *Ata-van vi lön naburun nvar ili atö-rs naburun nvar ili*
    3PL-go go.to LOCP hole stone ANA 3PL.SEC-see hole stone ANA
    They went inside the hole in the rock, they saw that the inside of the rock

42. *nga-mes   nga-vuy.   Bël naburun nvar in,   nga-gan   windo*
    3SG-be.dry   3SG-be.good but hole   stone DIST 3SG-be.like window
    was very dry. But inside this rock, there was like a window

43. *nga-roh   lön.   Ata-van atö-r-vi   lön   naburun*
    3SG-be.located LOCP   3PL-go   3PL.SEC-SBQT-go.to   LOCP   hole
    inside it. They went inside the hole and they

44. *atö-r-karëvtar   lön   naur aven   nga-gan   windo.*
    3PL.SEC-SBQT-look.through LOCP place INDF.ART   3SG-be.like window
    looked through the place that was like a window.

45. *Ata-ro-karkarëv   atö-r-karëv   ta-r-vi   vare   tö-rs-i*
    3PL-IPFV-look   3PL.SEC-SBQT-look   3PL-SBQT-go.to   outside 3PL.SEC-see-OBJ
    They were looking and looking, they went out, they looked at it

46. *tör-kar,   "Oo naur ha   nga-vuy.   Maliswahin   aven*
    3PL.SEC-say   ITJ place PROX 3SG-be.good hiding.place REL
    and said, "Oh, this place is good. This is a good hiding place

47. *s-drato   nga-vuy   ha.   Rohbay   drata-r-swah*
    POSS.GNR-1PL.INCL   3SG-be.good PROX   in.future 1PL.INCL-SBQT-hide
    for us here. We will hide

48. *ur   iha.   Nrang nga-r-gmay,   naus nga-r-gmay*
    place PROX   wind 3SG-SBQT-come   rain 3SG-SBQT-come
    here. The wind will come, the rain will come,

49. *be   driti-müjmüj   bi   driti-palongur   nari ki   drës."*
    NEGMOD   1PL.INCL.IRR-be.wet NEGMOD   1PL.INCL.IRR-hear   thing DIM INDF
    we won't get wet, we won't be able to hear a thing."

50. *Ta-vi   lön   naburun var   ili mjëg atö-r-va-tov   roh.*
    3PL-go.to   LOCP hole   stone ANA then 3PL.SEC-SBQT-GO-stay   be.located
    They went inside the hole in the rock and then they stayed there.

51. *Ale ata-tov   van, nrang tamës nga-gmay, naus nga-gmay,*
    LK 3PL-stay   go   cyclone   3SG-come   rain 3SG-come
    They stayed for a while, the cyclone came, the rain came,

52. *nrang nga-gmay ajba-müjmüj   ata-mes   roh   vane   vane*
    wind   3SG-come   3PL.NEG-be.wet 3PL-be.dry be.located go.LIM   go.LIM
    the wind came, they didn't get wet, they stayed dry for a long time,

53. *nrang tamës   ili   nga-jëb. Mjëg   ta-vi   vare   te-rs*
    cyclone   ANA   3SG-stop then   3PL-go.to outside 3PL.SEC-see
    the cyclone stopped. Then they went out, they saw

54. *naur   nga-r-vuy.   Ata-kemkem   aven   ata-kemkem.*
    place 3SG-SBQT-be.good   3PL-be.happy AUG   3PL-be.happy
    that everything was alright. They were very happy.

55. *Ale   nasëbon   nasëlvarin   s-ag…   nabol   aven   na-sër-i*
    LK   end   story   POSS.GNR-1SG   kastom.story REL   1SG-tell-OBJ
    The end of my story… the kastom story that I am telling

56. *nga-jëb   ai.*
    3SG-stop   here
    finishes here.

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